

A CHILD

- - - OF THE - - -

COVENANT



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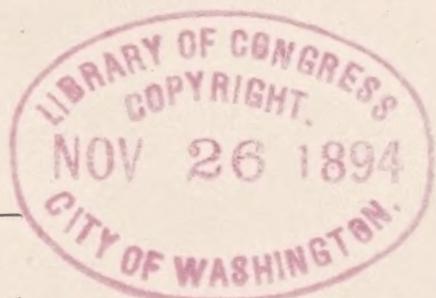
ELIZABETH B. GRAHAM.

“MARION.”

A CHILD
OF THE COVENANT.

— BY —

VIRGINIA CARTER CASTLEMAN.



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THE YOUNG CHURCHMAN CO.
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TO

MRS. MARY CHIPMAN,

ONE WORTHY THE NAME OF FRIEND, I LOVINGLY

DEDICATE THIS LITTLE BOOK.

V. C. C.

A CHILD OF THE COVENANT.

CHAPTER I.

Thus outwardly and visibly,
We seal thee for His own;
And may the brow that wears His cross
Hereafter share His crown.

—*Dean Alford.*

“Of such is the Kingdom of God.”

IN a darkened room in an unpretentious house in Harlem, a young mother lay dying. Outside, in the hall, two gentlemen were talking in low, earnest tones.

“Do you think the excitement would be too much for her, doctor?”

It was the younger man who spoke in a slow voice, pathetic in the intensity of pain which the effort seemed to cause him.

“No; nothing can harm her now. It might delay the end.”

“Then you will come with me?”

Dr. Thornton laid a kindly hand upon the young minister’s shoulder, indicative of assent.

John Martyn opened the door of the sick room softly; not so softly, however, but that the listening ears of the dying woman heard the sound, and her dark blue eyes lost their listless look in the eagerness of the gaze she fixed upon her husband.

“It is all right, darling,” he said, understanding the mute appeal. “Dr. Thornton has consented.”

“Right away?” he asked, bending low to catch the faint whisper. “Yes, it shall be done immediately, as soon as nurse brings her in.”

Here a white-haired lady, who had been sitting motionless by the other side of the bed, arose and went into an adjoining room.

“I am so glad, John,” the faint voice continued. “I shall feel happier to leave her now; she will grow up to be a comfort to you. Oh, John! it is hard to leave you and my baby.”

The young man’s face grew pale with emotion as the plaintive tones ceased.

“I would give my life for yours, darling! It

is hard. Oh! it is past understanding, that you should be taken from me now, and from the little one."

He rose and walked the floor with tightly clasped hands.

"John!"

He came to the bedside instantly, for her faintest whisper would have reached him, absorbed as he was in his great grief.

"John, I didn't mean to make it harder for you; I want to tell you that all the happiness I ever had was through your love. Think what I might have been if you had not taught me, helped me to be a Christian. Poor Addie, if she, too, could be saved! But your mother will take care of our little one; she will teach her. Oh! John, (and the breath came in quick gasps now) you don't think that my sins will be visited on my child? I could not bear that she should suffer as I have done."

"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, and doubt is swallowed up in the victory of faith; darling, you must not talk any more, you must save your strength."

“Tell them to come now, please,” she said beseechingly.

He arose and opened the door which his mother had passed through.

“Come,” he said briefly, passing on to where the infant lay in the nurse’s arms. The white christening robes hung in spotless folds about the tiny form, and the blue eyes were fastened upon the young father with a strange, intent look, unusual in the very young child. The father put on his surplice, and Prayer Book in hand, again entered the dimly lighted room. Dr. Thornton stood by the window awaiting them ; the nurse came in carrying the little one, who, as if conscious of the necessity for quiet, uttered no cry, but kept its gaze still fastened upon the white-robed minister.

“Stand closer, please,” and the grandmother motioned to the nurse to bring the child nearer that the mother might see her baby more clearly in the dim light.

All through the beautiful baptismal service, the dark eyes of the mother were riveted upon the child, and no sound but the minister’s voice broke the stillness.

“Marion,” the man’s voice trembled as that beloved name, the name of the mother, came from his lips, “Marion, ‘I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. We do sign her with the sign of the cross in token that hereafter she shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified.’”

The words rang out more clearly now, as the father pledged for the faith of his child. The curtain had been partially drawn up to admit the evening light, and the sun breaking for a moment through the clouded sky, illuminated the quiet room with its warm spring rays. As the last words of the service ended, the mother’s eyes closed as if in prayer, the pale face grew paler yet, and the end drew near. It seemed as if the tired spirit had but waited for the witnessing of that covenant seal. Dr. Thornton motioned the nurse aside, and stood watching the ebbing of that young life away. Only one month a mother—long enough to bear the pain and not know the joy of motherhood! The young husband knelt beside the bed and clasped one of the thin white hands in his own as if to stay the oncoming death-angel. The dark curls lay tan-

gled upon the pillow, and the long lashes swept the pale cheeks ; one moment the beautiful eyes opened and rested on the watching face—“John—Marion—God loves you,” and the spirit returned to God who gave it.

Some three years later, Dr. Thornton, riding on the elevated railway down to the business part of the city, saw a clergyman get on at one of the stations, and take a seat opposite.

“Why, Martyn, I hardly knew you ! It’s been a long time since we met, and living in the same city, too. Life is such a rush now-a-days a man can scarcely have a quiet moment to seek out old friends. I’ve thought of you often since you left us ; the little mission has grown rapidly, but we miss your guiding hand and earnest heart.”

“Thank you, doctor,” was the quiet reply. “I haven’t been back to the old home for some months ; somehow, a city parson finds his hands full with parish guilds, parish houses, Sunday schools and all the other duties of a large church, I, too, miss the old friends, the cordial hand-shakes, and the informal visits of those days of my mission work,” and Mr. Martyn’s eyes sad-

dened as his thoughts went back to the first year of his married life in Harlem suburbs. All this time Dr. Thornton's keen glance had been upon his friend's face, noting the change that had come upon the buoyant nature, the vigorous frame, of four years back.

"Martyn, you are working too hard; aren't you going to take a rest this summer? Go to the mountains or the seaside for a month or so, anywhere out of this crowded city. There are times in every man's life when a change of air and surroundings is imperative."

"It seems to me that you don't follow your own prescriptions, doctor; I never hear of *your* taking a rest," replied Mr. Martyn, smiling for the first time in the interview.

"I do, though; every now and then I run off to the country and spend a day or two; but mine is a different case. Seriously, my friend, I can't bear to see you so run down."

"I intend to take my little girl up the Hudson tomorrow to spend the summer months with her grandmother, at the old homestead; and perhaps I'll stay a week or so, too, to recuperate. This hot weather pulls a man down terribly; but there

is so much to be done, I cannot leave for long."

"Your congregation can certainly spare you, for most of them will be away themselves the greater part of the summer."

"The poor you have always with you," was the gentle reply.

"Ah! I see, up to your old ways still, going about among all those dark, fever-laden tenement houses, enough to ruin a constitution like yours. But good-bye, I must get out here. I would like to see you oftener."

"Can't you dine with me at one? early hours on account of my little housekeeper, you know."

"If I can get back in time, I will; I want to see my godchild and have another chat with you."

"I shall be delighted to have you. We'll expect you, Marion and I. Good-bye, till we meet again."

After the doctor's departure, the Rev. John Martyn sat with his paper before him, but he did not read. His clear, gray eyes looked musingly out upon the tops of the houses as the train rushed on its way.

"He will be a good friend to her when I am gone. Poor little girl, motherless, and soon to

be fatherless. I feel that I cannot hold out much longer. So much unfinished work, so many hungry souls, and so little physical strength. I must rouse all my energies for the sake of my work, and for my child's sake."

Mechanically he transacted the business which had called him down town, and returned homeward some two hours later. His steps quickened as he neared his home, and a smile lighted up his face as he heard the patter of little feet within the hall, and a child's merry voice calling to him.

"Sure, sir, she saw you at the window upstairs, and nothing would do but I must bring her down to open the door for you," was Bridget's comment, as the father entered.

"My papa!" cried the gleeful voice, and in an instant the little lass was seated upon her father's shoulder and on the way to the study on the second floor. A handsomely furnished parlor and suite of rooms were down stairs; but here, the master's simplicity of taste showed itself. The walls lined with well-filled bookcases, a few engravings, pictures of college friends and professors, a comfortable sofa, an *escritoire*, a center table, and some easy chairs, made up the furnish-

ings of this favorite room. Folding doors separated the study and bed-room, and just beyond was the nursery.

“See pitty wowers, papa! the lady dave ‘em to me; she told Bwidget to put ‘em in wawer for me dis morning.”

“Very pretty, darling.”

The curly head rested on his shoulder now, but only for a moment; presently a mischievous look came into the blue eyes, as Marion rubbed her tiny face against her father’s. Hers was a beautiful face, the dark curls framing its infant fairness, the rosy mouth dimpled in smiles; in repose, the child looked like one of Raphael’s cherubs. Now, it was a very human baby-face that looked up into the protecting one above it.

“Papa bwing Marion som’fin’?” she asked, diving into the nearest pocket.

“What did papa bring you? Look here,” drawing out a little paper bag.

“Choc’late dwops,” and the little maiden hastened to slide down to the floor with her treasures.

“Not so fast, Dot, you haven’t kissed your papa for them. Won’t you love me?”

Two dimpled arms went around his neck (one

hand still holding fast the candy bag), and the baby lips were pressed close to his in tender caress.

“There, pet, you may eat your chocolates now.”

“One for papa,” said the little voice, “one for Bwidget,”—“and one for the dear doctor when he comes,” put in her father, sinking down into the big arm-chair. “Des, one for the doctor,” continued the baby, “and one, free, six, for Mawun,” she concluded, looking up roguishly into her father’s face.

Now that the excitement of his home-coming was passed, the old pallor returned to his face, and unconsciously one hand was pressed upon his aching head.

Instinctively the little one felt the change. “Papa’s tick,” she said softly, gathering up the candy and putting it back into the bag; then she approached the chair and put a timid hand upon his arm, “Dod loves ‘oo, papa.”

The tears filled the father’s eyes; he had himself taught the child to say over and over again those last words of the young mother, but their full meaning dawned upon him more clearly now than it had ever before.

“God bless you, Marion, you are papa’s com-

fort. "Yes, God loves us both," and he folded her in a close embrace.

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"I fear he cannot live long. How sad it seems, and a strange Providence, that one of the most useful as well as the most gifted of our young clergy should be taken in his prime. I'm glad I persuaded him to go away; there is a possible chance that he may recover. That beautiful child! I can see that she is the most powerful lever to keep him in this world. Overworked brain, a tired-out mind and body; these seem the usual results of our present theological training. There's a grave defect somewhere, and it is a disastrous outlook for the Church. It was probably a mistake for so young a man to take a large city church; too heavy responsibility; but I couldn't blame him for leaving us when his home was all broken up; he thought the hard work would keep him from grief, I suppose. Unusual, too, for a man to grieve as he has done. Well, he's one among a thousand; the good he's done, too, in these four years, 'twould be hard to tell."

Thus mused Dr. Thornton on his return to

Harlem Heights, after dining with the Rev. John Martyn of New York City.

The next day found Mr. Martyn, little Marion, and Bridget, the nurse, on the steamer Albany, going up the Hudson River. It was a lovely day in the latter part of June, a recent rain had cooled the air and made the country on either shore beautiful in its freshness.

The father, lying back in one of the luxurious chairs by the open window of the saloon, watched the little one at play upon the deck, guarded by the faithful Bridget. Above them in the summer sky floated fleecy clouds, their shadowy reflections softening the brightness of the waters through which the steamer glided rapidly.

A quaint, lovely town is Newburg-on-the-Hudson, with its busy street along the river side, from which the one street car line runs up the steep hill to the villas on its summit. Ivy-covered churches on the corners of the shady street, aristocratic-looking houses set back in the midst of green lawns and flowering shrubbery, give a refined atmosphere to the place; withal it has a dreamy look, as if here, too, might be found a "Sleepy Hollow," where life could be softly

dreamed away. Across the river is another town of about equal size, nestled upon the hillside, and far down as the eye can reach, winds the happy river, with its smooth bays and swift-flowing shallows. Travellers often stop at Newburg to visit the chief attraction of the place—Washington's headquarters—where, in a low, square house, set in the middle of well-kept grounds, the great general for some time made his home.

In one of the most old-fashioned of the aristocratic houses lived John Martyn's mother. It was the old homestead, unchanged since the days of his boyhood, to which he was now bringing his motherless girl. Mrs. Martyn, in her soft, black silk dress, the white muslin cap set daintily upon her smooth, white hair, stood at the open door.

“Welcome, John, welcome to home and rest. Ah, darling, kiss grandmother again. How are you, Bridget? Come in all of you.”

The quiet, soothing tones were just the antidote for weariness, and the tired man felt he was indeed home again. He put one arm around his mother's tall, trim figure, and together they

entered the sitting-room, the nurse and child following.

In an upper room in this same house there lived, day after day, apart from the outer world and ignorant of its doings, the one only daughter. A bright child, a brilliant young girl just leaving school, her mind had suddenly given way. The physicians said it was over-study when the body was not strong enough to bear the strain. All remedies were tried in vain, and at last the case was pronounced hopeless. The mother took her daughter home, and the untiring devotion and love she gave this idolized child made the blighted life in some sense a happy one.

The girl, now grown to maturer age, would never be mature in mind. Her books, piano, and every comfort, even luxury, were hers. Sometimes snatches of wild songs were heard within those quiet walls, or gay tunes would be played by the fingers that had not forgotten their former skill, or there would be recitations of poems, sometimes sad, sometimes merry, but always pathetic in their incoherency.

Except for the patient mother and one faithful attendant, no one ever entered those two rooms

where that strange life had been led for many weary years.

It was this which had prevented the mother's staying with her son after his wife's death; and John would not be separated from his child, so, save for a few short visits exchanged, the mother and son had seen very little of each other during the past four years. With aching heart she noticed the slow step, the tired look in the frank, grave eyes that used to be filled with a merry light. Yes, he had come home to die, and he knew it, though others did not.

All day long he roamed about the old town, or wandered in the garden among the flowers, but always the dark-haired child was by his side, her tiny hand clasped in his and her merry prattle soothing him as nothing else could do.

He was not afraid of death: he had stood too often by the bedside of the dying. The prayers, the words of comfort he had spoken to others returned to him now fraught with deeper meaning. No, God had not forsaken him; it was only for the child he feared. Left alone, as she must one day be, would her feet stray from the path of peace?

“Father,” he prayed, “Thou art her father, too. She is Thine; bring her at last to Thine eternal home.”

Little Marion had no fears of the unknown future; and in those long summer days she was indeed the “light of the house.”

Every day some bright child-speech brought smiles to the lips of those older ones, who tried to hide all cares from sight of those wondering baby eyes, that, in spite of their merriment, seemed always to be intently watching the father’s face, as though they would reflect his every thought.

He stayed on through the summer; indeed, he was not able to return, and his congregation gave him leave of absence “until he should be well again.”

“Well again!” yes, there was one day when he was indeed “well,” but in his Father’s home; not in the noisy city, or with multitudes hanging upon his eloquent words, would he ever be “well again.” Heart trouble and over-worked brain, the physician said, caused his death.

Among his papers was a packet directed to his mother; it had been written some months previous and contained minute directions about the

care of his child. The interest of his life-insurance—five thousand dollars,—was to be used for her support and education; he knew his mother's slender income was already taxed to its utmost, but her love was limitless, he also knew. To Bridget he left the interest of one thousand dollars, provided she would stay with Marion until the latter was ten years old; at the end of that time the woman was at liberty to draw the principal if she wished.

This was all the means at his disposal, except his books and some personal property which were intrusted to his mother's care, a single locket, a daguerreotype, and the wedding ring being reserved for "his little girl."

One other request he made—that Marion should remain under his mother's care so long as the latter lived.

And little Marion was left an orphan at three-and-a-half years of age.

CHAPTER I I.

Alone in the world, what can be its fate ?
The Fatherless are the care of God.

—*Lord Lytton.*

BIDGET, where is my papa ?"

It was the morning after the funeral. The little girl had been kept in ignorance of the last sad rites, lest they might too greatly excite her mind with a sense of bereavement which she could not understand ; so Bridget had taken her to a neighbor's for the day, answering the child's questions as best she could, by telling her that her papa had gone away for a little while.

But now, on the third day, Marion's first words upon waking were the repetition of the question Bridget dreaded to hear.

The little white-robed figure sitting upright on the tiny cot, the pleading blue eyes, the quivering baby lips, were more than the faithful nurse could stand. Gathering Marion in her arms, she

rocked backwards and forwards in speechless grief—grief for the master from whom she had never received aught but kindness. The tears flowed freely, until presently, looking at the child, she saw large drops in the blue eyes, and felt sobs shaking the little frame.

“There, darling, we won’t cry any more ; and Bridget will tell you something. Papa was sick, pet, and he’s gone away to heaven to get well again.”

“Will Dod make papa well again, and bring him back to Mawion ?”

“How can I iver tell the choild ?” said the woman under her breath. “Sure, and yer father’ll never be sick any more, and some day he’ll send for his pet to come to him.”

“Des,” answered Marion, with a smile of child-like faith, “papa’ll tum for me, may be he’ll tum to-mower.”

And as the days passed into weeks it was “to-morrow” still, always the same thought that the baby lips uttered in connection with her father’s absence—“Papa’s tumin’ home to-mower.”

Gradually, as new impressions were planted upon the child-mind, as it opened more and more

to the reception of ideas, her father become a memory to her, and this memory, though it necessarily faded as the years went on, never quite passed into oblivion; it could always be recalled by an effort of the will.

The grandmother found her hands full, with the care of John's child, and that other child who could never cease to be first in all her thoughts. It seemed a pity, the world said, that the one of her children who could have best aided her declining years, should have been taken, and the other left; the one, a bright star among the sons of men; the other, a woman whose blighted life was named but with a sigh of pity, or a look of fear. Yet the mother shared not the world's verdict; for her, that solitary life absorbed all other interest in its own.

John's marriage, she had never approved. It was a linking with unbelievers, and would bring no good, she had said; for that other Marion was one who had stood apart from her family, in that she had not shared their infidelity. Beautiful had been her faith, when once she had taken her stand as "a member of Christ;" and it was John who had first found the struggling soul,

and helped it to the light. Of this the mother knew but little, for she, like her son, was a person of few words, but of unswerving devotion to duty, wherever it might call her; it was duty that called her to that dying bedside, 'twas duty now that called her to consider this child her own.

Her stern nature could but soften toward the lovely child; but she tolerated Bridget solely on John's account, because of her reverence for his dying request. And Bridget, divided between her love for Marion, and her fear of Mrs. Martyn's displeasure, was constantly crossing herself at sight of that stern countenance, and of those keen eyes that were upon her at every turn.

Morning and evening, the grandmother came to the nursery door, and at her knee the dark-haired child lisped her prayers, and always afterwards clasped her dimpled arms around the grandmother's neck, with a good-morning or good-night kiss, as the case might be. As yet she had not learned the necessity for repression of affection; and hers was a nature lovable, yet with a certain mixture of playful alertness which the grandmother sometimes mistook for wilfulness.

But most of all she dreaded the grave, questioning humor that often followed her gayer moods.

“Drandma, does Dod love 'oo?” Marion asked one day, coming up to that lady’s side, after an unusual frolic with the gray kitten in the nursery.

“I trust so, Marion,” was the reply.

Marion’s questioning eyes became wistful in their intense gaze.

“Drandma, won’t you smile at me and kitty, like Dod does up in heaven?” and then she was off again, as merry as ever in her play, leaving the grandmother puzzling over the strange words and quaint ways of John’s child, whom she loved more than she dared show, for fear it would wean her from that other love which needed even greater sacrifices than of old.

Perhaps the child would have been very lonely without Bridget to walk or play with her, out in the bright sunshine when the weather was good, or amuse her in-doors when it stormed; but perhaps, too, it might have been better, had Bridget not been there to take a place in Marion’s heart that the grandmother would otherwise have filled, had the child been more dependent upon her.

On the same street was the Rectory, where a

happy family gathered within the home-like walls; next to them was the Doctor's residence; and on the corner, the stone church, with its ivy hangings. At both houses Marion was a welcome visitor. There was a companionable disposition about the child which made her presence agreeable to both children and grown people.

No more gleeful laugh than hers rang out upon the lawns where the little ones played under the trees; yet she had been known to sit for an hour quietly listening to the conversation of older people, her bright eyes looking at the speaker as if she understood the meaning of his words; or again, she would chatter by the hour when with Bridget or some one she knew well.

“A remarkable child she is,” said Mrs. Wilton to her husband one day, “such a sweet baby face, and such cunning ways, yet so old-fashioned at times.”

“We must have her with the children as often as possible; her father was a shining light among the clergy. He is terribly missed from the ranks,” and the Rev. Paul Wilton looked out of the parlor window on the group outside.

"She doesn't look much like her father, does she?"

"Not at all, except for her chestnut curls and white forehead. As well as I remember, she resembles the mother whom I saw but once, shortly after the marriage. A very fair face hers was, and eyes just like the child's. Not a doll-face by any means, rather the reverse; character in every line."

It was a curious thing that the man who was recalling the picture of Marion's mother should himself be one of those persons who, while they harp much upon "force of character," possess a limited supply of that desirable quality.

A passably handsome face, almost expressionless in repose, but occasionally lighted by enthusiasm, was the Rev. Paul Wilton's. He was a man learned in the letter of the law, rigid in his observance of the same, yet lacking the spiritual fire which might have rendered his life beautiful, his ministry a harvesting of souls. Yet he had a large church, a wealthy and aristocratic congregation who were pleased with his elegantly written, well-delivered sermons; he, too, was content, though not lacking in ambition for the future.

Marion was now five years old, a large, finely proportioned child, but not rosy cheeked like the rector's sturdy boys; hers was a clear white skin with only a shadow of coloring to relieve its palleness; all the color of her face seemed concentrated in her eyes.

One afternoon Bridget took her little charge to their favorite place in Newberg, the grounds around the old house where Washington had his headquarters, which place commanded a fine view of the river and the surrounding hills.

The other children, Marion's playmates, were also there; Jessica Lynn, the Doctor's little daughter; and Frank and Claude Wilton, and their baby sister, Maud.

They were a merry party; Jessica, Marion and Claude were all five years old; Frank was six; while the little baby was only eleven months old.

They had quite a picnic. Bridget had brought some crackers, and at a store she let Marion buy some candy, a rare treat now, since grandma had said very sternly one day:

“Candy is not good for children, it ruins their digestion, Bridget.”

“Yes'm,” said Bridget, meekly, but inwardly

she resolved to spend a few of her own spare pennies for the child's delight, at the risk of future digestion.

Poor Bridget was not wise, as we all know, but the grandmother's theory, though good, was rather hard practice for a little girl of five. And Marion seldom asked for "choc'lates" now-a-days; that one repulse had been enough.

The Wilton children had bananas; so Bridget spread a cloth upon the grass—it was late in May—and they had a feast then and there; even baby Maud enjoyed it in the shape of a harmless cracker. The old man who had charge of the place came out to watch them and listen to the merry prattle. It was one of Marion's gay moods, and she and Frank found it impossible to keep from frolicking together on the grass.

"See that bird, Frank, see!" cried the little maiden; and Frank in his endeavor to see over the top of his head, almost turned a somersault over Claude who was trying to "see the bird," too. They climbed on the bench beside the old man, who told them about the tin cup that the soldiers were used to drink out of "from that very spring." They gathered buttercups by handfuls; and

watched the sail-boats on the river below the hill; and at last went home together, quite ready for their bread-and-milk supper.

Marion had learned to read by this time, and her grandmother noted with almost more pain than pleasure, the child's love for books. It was a family trait, she said to herself; and from that hour, she resolved that as far as possible she would shield this child from the evil that had come to the other, through an unequal development of physical and mental powers. There are few children with whom this precaution is necessary; the majority need to be stimulated, rather than kept back in their brain work; but the exception in some startling cases proves the rule.

Therefore Marion was kept in the open air as much as possible, and was not to go to school for three years; so far, this treatment had been beneficial, and the child was unusually healthy and free from the nervous irritability to which delicate children are so often subject. In spite of precaution, however, she spent every spare moment indoors, in looking over the picture books, and spelling out words to herself, when no one was by to tell her. She knew many nursery rhymes from

her Mother Goose book, and often repeated them to the gray kitten, or to her dolls.

Susie, the rag doll, who went to bed with Marion every night, was her chief confidant, and her dearest playmate, not even Jessica excepted.

Presently Marion was kneeling by her grandmother's knee, saying her evening prayer, the prayer that goes up nightly from so many hearts, old as well as young, the world over :

“Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.”

Many and many a time in her after life that prayer returned to Marion's thoughts, when the darkness brought no such dreamless slumber as blessed the little one that night.

And the years were speeding on, farther and farther from that death-bed where the infant life had begun its long journey through the world.

Five years later occurred another parting scene.

“I can hardly make up me moind to leave the child; but 'tis the grandmother is wishin' it, and I suppose the toime has come for us to part.”

“Oh, Bridget! must you go? I will beg

grandmother to let you stay with me always. Bridget, stay, please," and Marion's arms were thrown around her faithful friend in a tight embrace.

"Sure, an' if I could, I would, me pet, but what with your grandmother advisin' of me to go, and me own owld mother a writin' for me to come and see her before she dies, I think me mind's about made up to leave you for a toime. The Blessed Virgin knows I'd stay wid ye till me life's end, if I could do it wid the approval of me conscience. Niver moind, me pet, I'll come and see you often, when I can ; an' promise me, dar-lint, if ever you're in need of help, come to your owld Bridget."

"I promise, Bridget," replied the child, smiling through her tears, "and I'll write to you often, but I'll miss you more than I can tell."

CHAPTER III.

By cool Siloam's shady rill
 How fair the lily grows,
How sweet the breath beneath the hill
 Of Sharon's dewy rose.

Lo! such the child, whose early feet
 The paths of peace have trod,
Whose secret heart with influence sweet,
 Is upward drawn to God.

—*Bishop Heber.*

MARION would have missed Bridget's devoted care more than she did, but for her school-life; for two years past she had attended a private school in Newberg, where she had won the love of her teacher, and had enjoyed the companionship of children of her own age. Her grandmother, too, had lately shown an unusual tenderness in her manner to the child, a yearning for the love which she had, perhaps, not

fully valued in years gone by, and the need of which she felt more keenly as she saw Marion becoming absorbed in outside interests of her own. Perhaps, too, she felt that the years were fast bringing to a close her own life, and that soon the child would have to do without her guiding hand. Mrs. Martyn had aged much during the last five years; the strain upon her physical powers, the anxiety for those who were dependent upon her, especially that one who still required unremitting care, had told heavily upon her. The tall, straight figure was bent now; the black eyes had lost something of their fire; and her step had become feeble instead of the elastic tread of a few years back. In all the time since Marion's coming into the house, the child had been but once within those dreaded rooms upstairs; once, when a tiny girl, she had escaped Bridget's vigilance, and had wandered down the long passage to where the door stood ajar. Creeping into the room with timid steps, the little one encountered the wild gaze of the inmate fixed upon her. Startled by its fierce intensity, the child shrank back, and hid her face in the folds of her grandmother's dress.

“Pretty baby,” began the aunt, in a coaxing tone, “where did she come from? Come sit on my knee, and I’ll sing to thee,” the voice continued.

But Marion would not be coaxed, and suddenly the voice changed to a shrill key:

“Take her out, she’s a little vixen, take her out, I say!”

And Marion was glad enough to be led back to the nursery; but she never forgot the sight of the wasted face with its bright hectic flush, and the glitter of those wild black eyes. After that, Bridget had no trouble in keeping her from that part of the house. As she grew older, she lost something of the terror inspired by that one visit; and sometimes, playing out in the free air and joyous sunshine, her tender heart would be filled with pity for the poor caged woman, whose face was now and then seen at the side window that opened on the lawn. Instinctively the child came to understand why her grandmother was so often sad and stern, with the weight of that sorrow upon her.

“Marion,” said her grandmother one after-

noon, as the little girl came in from school, "I have something to tell you."

Marion came up to Mrs. Martyn's side immediately. She was warmly dressed, for it was January, and the ground was white with snow; the dark blue cloak with its fur collar brought out the fairness of her skin; and the fur cap could not confine the curls that fell about the well-shaped ears. The exercise of walking in the frosty air had brought an unusual color to her face.

"Child, you are very like your mother!" said Mrs. Martyn, noticing Marion's beauty for the first time in many months, nay, years; she was generally reticent upon such matters.

"Am I not like my father at all?" the girl asked wistfully, laying aside her cloak and cap, and pushing back the mass of hair from her forehead with a gesture peculiar to herself.

"Not in looks, but in ways, maybe," was the reply, in a softer tone.

That same gesture of the hand recalled John to his mother's mind with strange force.

"You inherit your father's disposition, I think."

“I am so glad!” murmured Marion, trying to recall, as she so often did, the memory of her father, the memory which had well-nigh passed into a dream, but a vivid dream, still. She seated herself on a low chair beside her grandmother’s side, and gazed steadily at the bright coal fire that burned in the open grate. It was a cozy sitting-room of which they were the occupants, and so thought the Maltese cat that purred beside them, a silver ball upon the red rug.

“Marion, you know your mother had a twin sister, do you not?”

“You told me that a long while ago, grandmother, three years ago, I think it was,” said the girl, thoughtfully.

“You may have thought it strange that you have never seen her all these years, that she has taken so little interest in your mother’s child. You are old enough now to understand what I am about to tell you. Shortly after your father’s death I received a letter from your aunt, living at the home-place in Massachusetts with her father, asking that you might come to live with her, or at least spend part of every year there. This request I refused, because your father’s

dying wish was for you to stay here as long as I live; but, my child, I feel that I am not many years longer for this world, and I want to see you provided with a home,—God knows how suitable it may be.”

“Why did not my father wish me to live with my aunt, grandma?”

The fearless eyes looked questioningly into the grandmother’s face.

“Child, you are too young yet to understand all the reasons; but there were difficulties your father foresaw. Your mother was a stranger to her own family after her marriage; there were differences of taste, and, sadder still, of religious views. I may say truthfully, Marion, that with the exception of your mother, none of her family had any religious belief whatever. You see now why your father wished you to be brought up under my care among Christian people.”

Marion hardly understood, but she knew that whatever happened, her father’s wish was her own, she had never lost the child-like confidence in “papa says so:” but she had also recollections of Sunday afternoons spent indoors learning the catechism, or at Sunday school repeating it; she

remembered that Mr. Wilton rarely met her that he did not question her on the Commandments, ending with "Quite right, my child, you do your grandmother credit." Marion never felt at ease beneath the cool gaze of the rector's pale brown eyes, nor liked the familiar pat upon her cheek at parting. In two qualities she resembled her grandmother; truthfulness and reserve; the latter had been noticeable only lately, for the impulsive baby nature had gradually changed into a shy thoughtfulness beyond her years. Yet at intervals, the buoyant spirit broke forth from the reserve thrown around it by the association with one used to rigid self-control.

"How old are you, child? My memory fails me often now."

"Eleven in March, grandma. The twenty-first of March," she added.

"A stormy month for your birthday. How well I remember the wind whistling down the chimney that morning. Well, as I started to tell you just now, your Aunt Adelaide was naturally offended at my refusal to send you to her, and from that time I have never heard a word from her until to-day."

Marion started, and laid her hand upon the arm-chair in which Mrs. Martyn sat.

“This morning I received a second letter, in which your aunt reproaches me for having kept you in ignorance of your mother’s family. She speaks of her devotion to her twin sister, and the sorrow which their separation caused her. At the close, she says that she expects soon to be in New York, and if I will re-consider the offer made in her former letter, she will take you and care for you as her own child.”

“I will not leave you, grandma!”

“As long as I live you shall stay with me; but Marion, our means are limited, and the time may come when you will have no other home to go to. I have therefore invited your aunt to come on here from New York to see you, that you may not grow up a stranger to your nearest kindred after I am gone.”

The thought of losing her grandmother had never occurred to the child, and, child-like, she could not grasp the full meaning of such a loss; but something in the aged woman’s tone touched her sympathetic heart, and tears filled her eyes.

"Grandmother, do not leave me; what will become of us, of Aunt Olivia and me?"

Olivia's name made the patient mother's brow contract with pain. "There, child, I must go to her. Do not worry, the Lord will provide," she answered, rising to touch the bell. "We will take tea in here this evening, Norah," she said, as the maid appeared at the door.

"Yes, ma'am," and Norah went for the tea-tray.

Marion, left to herself and to the bewilderment of thinking over her grandmother's words, found relief in petting the gray cat that had grown up with her from their frolicsome infancy in the old nursery days, but was now become a sedate creature, accepting the child's caresses with dignified approval.

Soon Norah returned to prepare the small round table for tea; the dainty centre piece was laid, and the old-fashioned china set, which Marion loved to see, was brought forth; also the silver urn. When the rose-colored lamp was lighted, it was as pleasant a room as one could wish on a cold evening in January.

Presently, Mrs. Martyn returned, and the two

sat down to their tea, which was for them both a light repast, Marion having not yet outgrown the bread-and-milk suppers of nursery days. After the clearing away of the table, the girl brought out her books, and for an hour, quiet reigned in the room, broken only by the clicking of Mrs. Martyn's knitting-needles; then, lessons being learned for the next day, Marion drew her low chair beside her grandmother, and, as was her wont, read aloud from one of her favorite story books.

To-night it was one of the "Dotty Dimple" books; the set had been a Christmas present from Dr. Thornton who always remembered his pet god-child at such times. Nearly every summer since her father's death, the kind-hearted man had taken a day from his business to make a visit to Newburg.

"It rested him," he said, "the trip up the river, and the sight of her bright face," but in his heart there was a deeper motive, the welfare of John Martyn's child, in whom he felt a fatherly interest. Indeed, he had often said he would like to adopt her, having no children of his own to brighten the home of his advancing years.

Dr. Lynn, Jessica's father, had been a college mate of his, too; and that gave additional interest to these yearly visits.

The orphan child could not have found a more faithful guardian than Dr. Thornton had proved himself to be; and Marion loved him as she had never loved anyone since her father's death.

When the clock struck nine, the "Dotty Dimples" book was put away, and the old Bible took its place; after the short family prayer was over, the grandmother and the child went up stairs together. So ended the day in its usual manner, the monotony of the quiet evening being rarely broken save for an occasional visit from some neighbor; the most frequent of these visitors, and perhaps the most welcome, being Jessica and her father from next door. Marion and Jessica were as devoted friends as they had been in baby days; together they had started to school, and had learned their lessons from the same books many a time, their fat little fingers wearing out the pages as they toiled up the road of learning. Now they were studying "Peter Parley's History,"

and working in fractions; besides which, they played duets together, both being good musicians for their age.

In the summer time they worked in their flower beds with great zeal, for had they not an object to make the flowers bloom their brightest?

It had been for some time Marion's special work to keep the vase on the sitting-room table filled with flowers; one day it happened that she was bringing in a bouquet of nasturtiums, when, looking up towards the window of Olivia's room, she saw the wan face with its wild eyes fixed on her. A certain wistfulness in their gaze appealed to the child's heart, and, hesitating but a moment, she turned from the sitting-room and running lightly upstairs, entered for the second time her aunt's room; all fear was lost in pity for the sufferer, and holding out the flowers, Marion said gently:

“They are for you, auntie, will you have them?”

Olivia came forward eagerly and took the proffered gift; then seating herself by the table, began caressing the flowers and talking to them in an undertone. She was in her mildest mood

that afternoon, and seemed as pleased as a little child with the bright flowers Marion had brought. The latter slipped out of the room unnoticed, but happy in the thought of having given pleasure to her aunt; from that day, she kept her choicest bouquets for the invalid; from that day, too, she lost her childish fear of her aunt's room. And Jessica shared her flowers with Marion for this purpose, which they kept secret from all but the grandmother, to whom it was an additional tie between the old love and the new.

So the little maidens worked, and played, and studied together in those sunny childhood days; in after years they looked back upon them with somewhat of the impression given, when the eye rests upon patches of calm blue in a storm-laden sky.

The Wilton children were still their playmates, and often the group of five were to be seen playing on one or another of the smooth green lawns in front of the respective houses, or rolling hoops along the quiet streets.

The time was fast coming, however, when the boys would grow beyond these effeminate games, and substitute for them more vigorous

sports; but even base ball could not in later days have greater charms than the memory of the blue eyes and the brown, that smiled so merrily upon them in those early, happy times.

CHAPTER IV.

The despoilers of all that beautifies and hallows life had desecrated the altar and denied the God! They had removed from the last hour of their victims the priest, the Scripture, and the Cross. But faith builds in the dungeon and the lazар-house its sublimest shrines, and up through roofs of stone, that shut out the eye of heaven, ascends the ladder where angels glide to and from prayer.—*Zanoni*.

And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.
—*The Bible*.

MISS ADELAIDE ROY accepted Mrs. Martyn's invitation, limiting her stay to one day at Newburg. In due time she arrived, and as Marion was at school in the morning there was opportunity for the two women to have a long and serious consultation about the girl's future. Necessarily there were many points of disagreement between them; but these by tacit consent were avoided as far as possible, reference being

made to her son's wishes, only as Mrs. Martyn deemed it due to give an explanation of the seeming coldness with which the Roy family had been treated, in regard to the little Marion. Miss Roy had made up her mind to pocket the insult to her pride, which for more than ten years had alienated the two families. She had loved her twin sister with as true affection as earthly love can be, when unpurified by the love of heaven; but self had long been a ruling motive in her life, a motive which time and care had never been able to wholly efface. In one instance alone she had lost sight of that motive; in her devotion to her father, a devotion which had amounted almost to idolatry. Others saw little to admire in the cold, exacting man, who had scarcely seemed worthy of the name of father; yet these two understood each other.

Olander Roy had taken pride in fashioning after his own mould the twin sisters, whose timid-hearted mother had early ceased resistance to the husband whom she feared, as well as blindly loved. His atheistic views, his indomitable pride in his own superior intellect, had won from her complete submission while they struck terror to

her heart; so that after some years of married life the poor wife had sunk into a nonentity, so far as her opinions were regarded; and in place of the rigid Puritanism of her youth, there had sprung up a chaos in her mind which resulted in a vague sort of Universalism, that comforted her amid the surrounding seas of unbelief.

The one great blow to his false pride came to Olander Roy, when he found that the daughter, who had seemed most pliable in his hand, whose clinging nature and tender-heartedness had unconsciously twined themselves about the better fibres of his being, was like the willows that bend, but break not in the adverse winds, and rise erect after each succeeding storm. Gradually he became aware that the pliant nature had found a Rock of Ages upon which to fix itself in unchanging rest; an anchor for the soul, against which all the darts of the enemy were of no avail.

The father first felt the change upon the return of the sisters from their second term at a school in Boston, a school chosen by him on account of its rationalism, as well as for its scholastic merit. It was there that Marion Roy,

weary of the vain disputes, appalled by the apathy and haughty pride of those so-called free-thinkers, found herself continually groping for a truth but dimly seen in the depths of her struggling soul. Wandering alone one Sunday afternoon (for Adelaide had little sympathy for what she termed "a weakness,") Marion had strayed into the shadow of a church porch from where the music within could be distinctly heard. It was the Epiphany season, and the white-robed choir was singing in sweet accents the hymn :

"Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness, and lend us Thine aid,
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid."

Half frightened at her temerity, the girl crept into a back seat, and listened to the sermon that followed. It happened (or rather let us say, God willed) that the preacher was a young man, recently ordained, and having charge of the church in a temporary absence of its rector. He was filled with zeal for the Master's cause, and a great longing to help souls to Christ in a city like ancient Athens in more than one respect; a city where many, many altars are daily erected to an

“unknown God.” His theme was the closing verses of the *Benedictus*:

“Through the tender mercy of our God: whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us;

“To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death: and to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

To Marion Roy, who had never heard the Gospel in its true simplicity, but always as a book to be sneered at for its impossible doctrines, the simple narrative of the birth of Christ, His childhood, and divine mission came like a revelation to her bewildered soul. Eagerly she listened to the earnest appeal that men would open their hearts to the glorious light of the “Dayspring from on high.” “To guide our feet into the way of peace.” What hunger of the weary soul might not here be satisfied? The way of peace!

She thought of all that word “peace,” might bring to the home where it was not known; to the proud, self-satisfied, and yet restless father; to the despondent mother, dreading atheism, yet having no knowledge of the “truth as it is in Jesus;” to the twin sister, with her splendid powers of mind and body; and lastly, but great-

est need of all, to herself, longing to hide in the Rock of Ages, yet scarcely able yet to bear the cross, to follow the Star of Peace burning brightly in the distance.

After the sermon, she stole out again into the street, and wandered back to where Adelaide and a number of young companions were spending the afternoon, in reading aloud the latest production of a prominent infidel of the day. The contrast was unbearable; pleading a headache, the girl went up to her room to think, and—yes—to pray!

Once or twice afterwards Marion Roy went again to the church where she had heard that memorable sermon; always quietly sitting in one of the back pews and hurrying away as soon as the services were over. Not so quietly, however, but that the young minister, intent upon his work of drawing souls to Christ, noticed the thoughtful face and wistful eyes of the stranger, eyes full of longing and unrest.

One afternoon he overtook her on her way to the church, and, bowing courteously, mentioned having seen her there, and asked if her family attended elsewhere. Gradually he drew the story from her hesitating lips, and, deeply interested,

prayed in his heart for grace to lead her to the Cross. That was the beginning of a friendship which lasted until death; for it was John Martyn who thus spoke to her for the first time. After that he always looked for her in the old seat, and when she came not, missed her presence from the listening throng. He was little surprised, however, to learn, after a longer absence than usual, that Marion's father had forbidden her further attendance at Church.

"I must obey my father," said Marion with downcast eyes, as one day they met upon the street. "But Mr. Martin, I have my Bible, and I will remember all that you have taught me."

"God will guide you," he answered simply, though his heart ached for her.

So Marion and Adelaide went home again, Marion to be treated with contempt by Adelaide, and with open ridicule by her father. But the mother? For the first time Marion realized what her mother must have suffered, and a new bond of sympathy sprang up between them, the timid, despairing woman, and the tender, hopeful girl. It was not long that she could be of use at home, for in less than a year the mother died.

“I believe in the infinite mercy of God, my child,” she said to Marion, shortly before her death.

“And in Jesus Christ whom He hath sent,” added the girl, bending over the worn face.

“It may be so; I trust it is. God help you to be strong in your faith.”

And Marion felt that with her mother’s death, life would be harder than before. It was at this crisis that John Martyn, who had never entirely lost sight of her, came to tell her of his love, and to ask her to help him make a Christian home in the mission field he was about to undertake.

Mr. Roy at first refused his consent, but finding Marion determined, said “she might go her own way.”

From the day of her marriage he never mentioned her name until he learned of her death. Then a momentary wave of tenderness flowed over his selfish heart.

“Poor little one! If there be a God, she will find Him in that eternity in which she believed. Well, Adelaide, you and I are left. For me,” with a bitter smile, “*Ma demeure sera bientot la*

neant.'' (My dwelling place will soon be nothingness).

Even Adelaide, the bold and brilliant, shuddered as she listened to those words, and turned silently away. She missed her sister's companionship more and more as time went on; and often the remembrance of Marion's pleading blue eyes would bring tears to her own. But few saw her in these sadder moods; to most of her friends she was the same gay, callous woman, with a certain fascination of manner and brilliancy of wit that won admiration in spite of her assumed coldness.

It had been said of the two sisters in their girlhood, that Marion was the beauty and Adelaide the wit, and there was truth in the statement; yet both were possessed of bright, retentive minds. Adelaide, however, had one gift which compensated greatly for her lack of beauty; a voice of considerable compass and exquisite pathos, and she cultivated it with the ardor of an ambitious nature. Often at the informal parties gathered in the Roy house, that clear voice would move the listeners to tears, or, changing to a lighter key, would call forth peals of laughter from the guests. She knew her power, and had

used it long and well; but often her heart was filled with longing for truer friendship; readier sympathy than was ever given her by her associates, many of whom little guessed her need.

It was this yearning for love, devoid of flattery or favor, which made her thoughts turn persistently towards the child whom she had never seen; and when her father, too, had died, holding death to the last to be "the wreck to which all must come," she felt more than ever drawn to the little stranger in whose veins ran the blood of her proud family.

She decided to sell the old homestead, which now had but sad associations for her, and make Washington her temporary residence.

In that city her nearest relatives (except Marion) lived, and in her frequent visits there she had formed an attachment for the place. It was at this juncture that she wrote the second letter to Mrs. Martyn, which resulted in her visit to Newberg.

She resolved to accept as little as possible of that lady's hospitality, and thus limited her stay to one day.

Part of her family history was known to

John's mother, enough to make that lady dread Adelaide's influence for John's child; so it was only after earnest entreaty from the aunt, and a sense of the justice of the plea, that Mrs. Martyn consented to Marion's being left to Miss Roy's care in the event of her death.

"You need not fear that I will try to influence the child against the desire of her parents. Her mother was dearer to me than all else, and I trust in some measure to atone for my seeming hardness in the past."

Strange words to come from those proud lips, but the lonely woman felt a relief in thus unburdening her heart; and ties of blood are strongest, after all.

So when Marion came bounding into the room from school, she found waiting for her, the mother's sister whom she had half-longed, half-feared to meet; but fear vanished when she felt the tenderness of Adelaide's embrace.

"So like her," murmured Miss Roy, holding the child's uplifted face in her hands, and gazing into the dark blue eyes.

"Rightly named Marion, little one," she said at last, kissing her again, as the child gently dis-

engaged herself from the eager grasp of one whom the world had never seen so moved before by the power of unselfish love.

And Marion, with her wondrously observant gaze, noticed the trembling of the proud lips, and the sudden lighting of the cold gray eyes. From that moment she felt that her new aunt would love her, and with the confidence of childhood, she crept into the waiting heart.

Dr. Thornton did not altogether approve of the grandmother's decision.

"Why did you not let me have her to educate as my own daughter?" he said, upon one of his flying visits.

"I had not the heart to refuse her aunt, who has, after all, the strongest claim upon her. I believe John himself would say it is the right course to pursue, and the child has taken a fancy to Miss Roy," replied Mrs. Martyn, but her face wore a troubled expression.

"She must at least spend part of the time with me. Think of the home influence so suddenly withdrawn at an age when she will need it most."

"I believe her early training, her child-faith,

will defy all adverse influence. It is wonderful to see in one so young, the perfect trust she has in Jesus."

The doctor looked thoughtful, then added:

"We'll see; perhaps you are right. And it seems but just, after all, that her mother's only sister should have some pleasure in the child."

A few moments later he was in the hall playing "Magic Rings" with Marion; and even Mrs. Martyn found their laughter contagious, leaving her easy chair to watch the progress of the game.

CHAPTER V.

“And her face is lily-clear,
Lily-shaped, and dropped in duty
To the law of its own beauty.

“Oval cheeks encolored faintly,
Which a trail of golden hair
Keeps from fading into air;

“And a forehead fair and saintly,
Which two blue eyes undershine,
Like meek prayers before a shrine.

“Face and figure of a child,
Though too calm, you think, and tender,
For the childhood you would lend her.”

—*A Portrait.*

ON a quiet avenue in the city of Brooklyn, there stands, among a row of more modern buildings, a house of gray stone, conspicuous for its old-fashioned, comfortable aspect in contrast with the smarter appearance of its neighbors, a plain, four-story building, its only adornment being a small iron-railed enclosure around the

windows of the lower story, and stone steps leading up to the front door. Upon this door a silver plate bears the name of "Dr. Hugh Thornton;" and here for a number of years Marion's guardian had lived, having moved from Harlem a short time after the death of the Rev. John Martyn. He had sold his property and his practice in that rapidly growing part of New York to a younger physician, and having won for himself a reputation, was easily established in the quieter city which he preferred as a residence, and where he had made many friends.

It was in front of this same house that a young man in clerical garb paused in his rapid walk along the street, and after a scrutinizing look at the name on the door, ascended the steps and rang the bell. It was a warm afternoon in the latter part of September, and the sun beat down upon him with considerable force. It was with a feeling of relief, therefore, that he heard footsteps in the hall, and saw the door opened to admit him. Presenting his card, he was ushered into the cool, tastefully-furnished parlor, and seating himself in an easy chair, began to make

use of a palm-leaf fan which lay on the table near by.

As his eyes grew more accustomed to the light, their gaze wandered from the old portraits on the wall to the soft-colored piano lamp, and on through the open folding-doors to the dining-room beyond. Presently he found himself scanning a small figure curled up on a sofa, just within the farther room, and became conscious of a pair of startled blue eyes answering his gaze. The child rose as she found herself observed, and taking up the book that she had been reading, was about to leave the room, when the rustle of a lady's dress was heard on the stairs; and Mrs. Thornton entered the parlor.

"Stay, Marion," she said, motioning the child to come towards her, "this is a delightful surprise, John; when did you arrive?"

"Just an hour ago," replied the young man, kissing the sweet-faced woman whose hand held his in cordial welcome.

"And you came right to see us—that was kind of you. Your uncle will be delighted to see you, and you know what a pleasure it is for me to have one of my family with me. We have been

so long separated”—then seeing his glance wander towards the child, who stood reluctantly in the doorway, she added quickly: “This is Marion Martyn, the doctor’s little ward. Come, Marion, and speak to my nephew before you go. John is fond of little girls, I know.”

At the sound of that name, the child regarded the stranger with a peculiarly earnest look from under her long black lashes; then advancing shyly, held out her hand to him.

“I have a sister near your age at home,” he said, gently, bending down to kiss the fair face, whose owner drew back, half resenting the caress.

“Is she the daughter of the Mr. Martyn who started the mission I used to hear Uncle Hugh speak of?” he asked, as the child left the room.

“The same,” answered his aunt, “and that mission has since grown into a church, and has for its rector, now, dear old Dr. McKean. My husband often goes over to see him, and we shall never feel more interest in any church than we did in that one which grew up under our very eyes.”

“And with your earnest assistance, I know,” added her nephew.

His aunt smiled affectionately upon him. He was her only sister's child; the home of their girlhood had been in the great city of Chicago, but some ten years had passed since she had seen any of her family except this nephew.

"Tell me how you left the home people, and about yourself," she said, drawing him to a seat on the sofa beside her.

"All well, I am glad to say; Kate starting to school for the first time. You know mother has always had her taught at home before."

"And yourself? We were sorry not to be present at your ordination."

"Yes; I'm through at last, and ready for work, please God."

"Where do you go now?"

"To be assistant to our old pastor, Dr. Nevis, of St. Luke's."

"Dear Dr. Nevis, how I should like to see him," murmured Mrs. Thornton. She was a much younger person than her husband, Dr. Thornton not having married until after he was fifty.

"Too much hard work, to think of falling in love," he had said, until one day he met a charm-

ing young lady from Chicago, and after that, business was slack for awhile. Mrs. Thornton was now about forty years of age, a gracious, queenly woman, whose cordial manner won the hearts of all who knew her, and whose lovely presence made the doctor's house a home in the truest sense of the word. She wore a tea-gown of some soft, silvery shade, set off with black ribbons; and her prematurely gray hair lay in luxurious coils upon her shapely head.

John Seymour noticed with a young man's keen perception the graceful movements of the soft white hands, which only the wedding-ring adorned; he had known the time when those same hands had nursed him through a dangerous illness, and their cool touch upon his brow he remembered still.

“Aunt Rena, didn't I hear some story about John Martyn's wife having been an infidel?”

“Not his wife,” she answered, saddening as she recalled the lovely girl she had known so short a time, but so well. “She was one of the loveliest Christians I ever knew, but her family were avowed unbelievers, and bitterly opposed the marriage. This child you saw to-day is

named for the mother, and resembles her closely. I never saw a greater devotion than existed between the little one and her father; although she was such a tiny child at the time of her death, she had been his companion since she could walk and talk. Even now, the mention of his name sometimes brings tears to her eyes, though she can hardly remember him distinctly. She has been brought up by her grandmother, a very stern old lady, yet a noble-hearted woman whose time has been taken up, and her strength severely taxed, by the care of an invalid daughter. The doctor thought the child needed more attention, and better advantages, than her grandmother was able to give her, so we persuaded Mrs. Martyn to let her spend this winter with us and go to school here. She is very little trouble, and almost as companionable as if she were grown. Indeed, I am constantly fearing she will develop too rapidly, and outgrow her strength. We have to watch her to prevent her over-studying; her tastes are well formed, too. Think of a girl not long past her twelfth birthday understanding Scott's poems. 'The Lady of the Lake,' is her favorite."

John Seymour was interested in this account of the child whose white face, in its setting of curls, had strangely impressed him.

“There comes Uncle Hugh now!” he exclaimed, as a familiar step was heard outside.

“My dear boy, I’m glad to see you!” was the cordial greeting, accompanied by a hearty hand shake. “You look somewhat more rugged than most of our young ministers just out of college, I’m glad to say; and to think he is a reverend, too!”

The Rev. John Seymour laughed a little nervously, and stroked his brown mustache to hide his embarrassment. He was of medium height, strongly built, with straight brown hair cut close above a broad forehead; his eyes were dark brown with an occasional amber tint showing in the iris.

“I suppose you have no difficulty in recognizing me?”

“Not the slightest; you have changed very little these five years, John. Of course you look somewhat older, have an air of the polished man, in fact; and then your mustache adds much to your dignity, to say nothing of your personal beauty, eh?”

"Oh, that's a friend of almost five years' standing, but not a very generous one, I must admit," was the laughing reply.

"By the way, John, I've been thinking if Dr. McKean should need an assistant, I would mention your name, that is, if you care for the work. It has grown tremendously of late years."

"I am pledged to Dr. Nevis for the present, thank you, Uncle, and I think I would not care to be assistant to any one else; in a few years I hope to be settled in a parish of my own."

"Independent, eh? I like that, but it is well to have experience. There's no hurry about the other matter, though. I mentioned it to find out whether you would care to come to this part of the world; there's probably a wider field where you are, and more life in your great western city."

"It is a grand city! Plenty of wealth and luxury, but there are the poor as well as the rich, the ignorant as well as the learned, the wicked by the side of the good, and often predominating; human nature is the same the world over, as we know. I don't care for display. I desire to live simply and work faithfully wherever duty calls, Uncle Hugh."

“It is a sacred calling, John, and it is a joy to me to know that you have not lightly taken it upon you, that you will reverently and earnestly perform the offices of a priest in the Church of God. Consecration is the greatest need, no doubt,” he continued, musingly, “and, thank God, there are many such men in this great city; but the harvest is great and the laborers are few in comparison. I often wish for John Martyn’s clear head and earnest heart; he always seemed to be filled with a supernatural fire, yet his motto was ‘I am among you as he that serveth.’”

“I feel an interest in the work he started. There is a handsome church now in place of the little chapel, Aunt Rena tells me.”

“Yes, it contains a beautiful memorial window to the founder; but the best memorial of such a man is the memory of loving deeds that God alone can reckon, but which live on in the hearts and lives of those who knew him, and teach us not to ‘despair of the world for which Christ died.’”

“This is an age of benevolence, Uncle Hugh. Every day I see fresh evidences of the charitable spirit at work, in our cities especially.”

"That is true," replied Dr. Thornton; "for instance, this Fresh Air Fund is a wonderful thing, and I am particularly interested in the Floating Hospital for sick children, and their poor mothers."

Hereupon the doctor launched forth upon his favorite theme, describing the various plans which the committee had on hand for the improvement of the vessel, increased accommodation, etc.

"Here is a collection of photographs taken at the time of starting; the nurses and babies pass in before the inspector, whose business it is to see that no contagious diseases are taken on board; there they are on deck, and the trained nurses, our latest improvement, are walking around looking after the very sick ones. Bless me! when I get wound up on this subject I never can stop under an hour, and it's time you were going to your room to rest awhile before dinner. I see my wife has slipped off while I was talking. I tell her she don't appreciate the work; but she is as much interested as anybody, only she's heard about it so many times. Come, John, this way," he concluded, taking up the young man's valise, and leading the way upstairs.

Marion had just returned from a walk through the park, with old Bridget, who had come in from the country on purpose to see her "darlint," having heard of her being at Dr. Thornton's. The two friends had found the afternoon all too short for the many confidences they had to exchange, and it was with tears of real sorrow that the child again bade her faithful nurse good-bye.

"You are not too big to kiss me, pet?" she asked, as Marion threw her arms around "Biddy," as she still called her.

"I'll never be too big for that, Biddy," she answered, with a firm ring in her voice, as she spoke the words.

John Seymour, looking over his Uncle Hugh's shoulder at the photographs of the babies on the floating vessel, caught the drift of this conversation outside, and as he followed that gentleman upstairs, smiled to himself.

"She'll never be too big to kiss 'Biddy,' but she didn't half like my kissing her to-day, the sly little puss!"

Turning the passage-way, he caught sight of the girl in the hall below, her curls pushed back

with one hand, in the other a box of her favorite chocolates—Bridget's parting present. In spite of the smile that dimpled her flushed face, he never forgot the wistful gaze with which Marion stood watching the old woman's retreating figure.

At dinner, however, when she appeared in a fresh evening dress of soft white stuff, all traces of tears were gone, and Marion was the doctor's pet once more, a very human little child who wanted cake and sweetmeats despite her guardian's protests, but obeyed implicitly a single look from Mrs. Thornton whom she had secretly enthroned in her young heart as the "queen of love and beauty."

The bowl of autumn roses in the centre of the table filled the room with fragrance, and the evening light fell upon the party of four seated around the hospitable board; the bright rays brought out the golden threads in the child's hair, and played in soft radiance among the petals of the creamy-tinted roses.

CHAPTER VI.

Ah! my friends, when God's great angel
Cries aloud the deeds of might,
At the day when hearts are opened
In the holy Father's sight;

Then the greatest deeds and noblest
Will be those unheard of now,
Hidden under silent heart-beats,
And an uncomplaining brow.

Deeds of patient self-rejection,
Wrung from hearts that made no moan,
Tender hearts that like the Master's,
Trod the wine press all alone.

—*The Great Victories.*

THE return of the spring days brought back to Marion's mind her flower garden in Newberg; and she wondered whether Olivia missed the fresh bouquet that she was wont to have upon her table daily, or if Jessica Lynn would sow seed for them both, when the warm May

days had prepared the ground. The child had often thought of her grandmother, and the home upon the Hudson; indeed, she seemed as much a part of the place as the birds that sang in the old trees on the lawn, building their nests each year in the same protecting branches. To Mrs. Martyn, the child's absence had caused more pain than she would acknowledge, even to herself; the winter evenings seemed long beside the lonely fire, though it burned as brightly as in former times, and she was unable now to wait upon Olivia as she had done when her strength was greater. Most of the care fell upon the faithful attendant who had known her from a child; but the mother often pondered over her daughter's helpless state, and thought of Dr. Thornton's advice to procure for her a comfortable home in an asylum, near the great city where he lived. She could not bear to think of Olivia's being turned over to strangers' care, and would put away the idea with a sigh; but again it would recur.

“If Hannah would go with her, it would seem less hard, but that is too much to ask of her, after all these years of service, and being accus-

tomed now to consider this place her home. We will try one more summer here, and Marion will be back with her merry ways; will come with the flowers, and the spring birds."

A smile illumined the wrinkled face, and she almost thought she could hear the child's light step upon the stairs.

Marion did come home again, but not with the spring flowers; the crocuses, the tulips, and the early violets had ceased to bloom, but the June roses blossomed to welcome her coming, and the little pansy bed beneath Olivia's window was filled with its bright faces of velvety blue, and yellow, and maroon. Jessica had attended to the pansy bed, and felt amply repaid when she saw Marion's delighted surprise over her "dearest flowers."

Her grandmother's pleasure at her return showed itself in many little ways, which the child was quick to appreciate. The year in the doctor's home had not been without its fruit; while Marion's physical growth had been rapid, and she looked tall beside her grandmother's bent form, her mind had been equally developed, and her sensitive nature had expanded under the

influence of Mrs. Thornton's sympathetic love. The girl seemed to have regained the impulsive, affectionate nature which her father alone had heretofore known; and this affection showed itself in the desire to make some return to her grandmother, for her care in the past; so that Marion's presence was doubly welcome, and she was a busy maiden all the long summer days, running errands, weeding flower-beds, and trying to remember all Mrs. Thornton had said about keeping up her music, and not tiring her eyes with reading.

Frank Wilton was at home from school, too; he had grown into a tall, slim, young fellow, with a full sense of his own importance in the world, and looked upon Claude, his rollicking red-haired brother, his junior by one year, as "an awkward kid;" but Marion thought Claude's freckled face and honest brown eyes were handsomer than Frank's pink-and-white skin, and yellow locks; this fact she confided to Jessica Lynn. The children were learning to play lawn tennis, and it was a pretty sight to the eye—the three little girls, Marion, Jessica and Maud, coming along the street of an afternoon with

their rackets swinging, and their faces flushed with the exercise of the game.

“A little lass with golden hair,
A little lass with brown,
A little lass with raven locks
Went tripping into town.”

So runs the rhyme, and such the picture that the streets of Newberg often saw that summer.

The following autumn, Mrs. Martyn decided to rent her house, and carry out the plan of moving to Brooklyn for the winter. Hannah had consented to go with Olivia to the asylum, for a while at least; and Dr. Thornton used his influence to see that the latter was surrounded with every comfort.

“I will drive you out to see her every day that you are able to go,” he had said to Mrs. Martyn in his kind-hearted way; and his wife had insisted that she should spend the winter with them, instead of going to housekeeping as she had intended. Mrs. Martyn realized her feebleness, and was grateful for the kindness of these friends, upon whom she had no claims of blood; the thought of being again separated from Marion was too hard for her to bear, so, to the

relief of all parties, it was decided as the Thorntons wished.

It was fortunate for Marion that she was with these kind friends, for, as the cold weather came on, it was evident that the grandmother was failing fast. Every day, when the girl returned from school, she went straight to her grandmother's room, sure to be rewarded with an eager look of welcome from the invalid, to whom her coming brought a glimpse of the outer world as it appeared to the bright child-eyes. Often, too, Mrs. Thornton brought her work into the quiet room, and Marion would read aloud, some of her grandmother's favorite books, not always understanding them, but happy in the thought of the comfort they gave to the dear invalid.

The cold March winds came, and with the wild gusts passed away the life that had braved so many storms in uncomplaining silence, and the heart "that made no moan."

It was hard for the child to realize that death had again taken away her nearest kindred; harder yet to realize that the home in Newberg was broken up, and that changed surroundings would soon come into her life. Child-like, she did not

know the extent of her loss; years passed before the full realization came upon her. For the present, the tender sympathy of "Aunt Rena" (as she called Mrs. Thornton) filled the emptiness of the young heart, thus twice bereaved, yet not wholly motherless.

Miss Roy came on to the funeral, and would have taken Marion back with her to Washington; but Dr. Thornton urged that she might remain with them a while longer, continuing her studies, which had suffered much interruption of late. Seeing that her niece shrank from any immediate change, the aunt gave an unwilling consent, and departed, feeling jealous of the gracious woman to whom Marion clung with all the strength of her earnest nature.

"I will bide my time," she said to herself with a cold smile, and went back to her books on science, and the friends who feared, as well as admired, her "bold, brilliant mind."

She had lately been much engrossed in preparing for publication a genealogical work of the two branches of her family, their ancestry, their Puritan training, and their influence, politically and religiously. It gave her a sort of satisfaction

to trace a certain peculiar bent of the mind towards free-thinking, which appeared in various members in each successive generation; and she was proud of preserving the family archives for further reference.

“Marion shall know one day, that she comes of a proud stock, not deficient in brains. My poor father! to think that his only grand-child, does not know his name.”

Thus a new impetus was given to the work she had undertaken, as the time drew near for which she had longed, when her niece should be hers to train, and to love as she could love none else on earth. And the object of her thoughts and unremitting toil, was living on in her guardian’s home, unconscious of the future, and content with the present; indeed, it was a sweet influence which surrounded her in Mrs. Thornton’s refined presence, a wide, pure atmosphere of Christian life in its most ennobling sense.

Sometimes, “Uncle Hugh” took his ward with him to visit Olivia in her new home, and always the girl carried flowers to cheer the afflicted one. Upon the first of these occasions, Olivia showed signs of recognizing the child, whom she had not

seen for some months, by repeating a nursery rhyme which she had caught from Marion, years ago.

“Tell me a story, Peggy,
And, pray, what shall it be?
Shall it be of a star, or a fairy?
Or, of children, like you and me?”

Breaking off, suddenly, she said, coaxingly:

“It’s a flower story, isn’t it, little one? You always tell me flower stories;” then buried her face in the bunch of sweet peas she held in her hands.

Marion laughed at the recollection of “Peggy’s Story,” which recalled the old nursery, and Bridget listening admiringly to the rhymes, always delighted at the trick she had taught the little one of shaking her head mischievously over the lines:

“No, don’t let it be children,
They always do something wrong!”

Marion was glad, too, that Olivia never grew tired of flowers; they amused her by the hour.

The child loved to think how pleased her grandmother would be to know of the enjoyment the aunt derived from these visits; those last months of Mrs. Martyn’s life had drawn the two

together more closely than ever before, Marion being the unconscious support of her grandmother's declining days. The elder woman's stern manner had softened much when the pressure of care was removed from her mind, and she found her daughter comfortably established at the asylum. The relaxation from duty removed the necessity for rigid self-control, which for so many years had taxed her powers of mind and body to the utmost, and Mrs. Thornton's tender sympathy brought to light the depth of affection hidden in that seemingly cold heart. The Doctor was charmed to find her interested in the benevolent schemes which he was always projecting in his busy brain, and spent many spare moments explaining his plans to her attentive ear. Her death, therefore, created a sense of loss in the heart of each member of the little household; it seemed that an incentive was, for the time, taken from their lives, when they no longer had to plan for her comfort and amusement.

It was the following winter that Dr. McKean retired from active service in the ministry, on account of age and feeble health; and the vestry,

at the suggestion of Dr. Thornton, called the Rev. John Seymour to be his successor. That young man had proved a zealous worker, and a successful preacher in his native city, as assistant to his former pastor. Having a knowledge of the new field, for which he felt a special interest, he accepted the call, and shortly afterwards entered upon his rectorship in Harlem.

Marion looked thoughtful over this news. She had been once to see this church, with its memorial window to her father. The memory of this beautiful token of his people's love was very sweet to her. Often, she would steal away to her room, and, taking out the daguerreotype, her father's last legacy, would gaze upon the features of those two faces, which she might never hope to see on earth; the one, gentle and fair in its womanly beauty; the other, strong and noble in its protecting love. She realized more keenly, as she gazed upon them, that no other love, however sweet, can take the place of the parent's love; yet, it seemed fitting, that in death these two "should not be divided," and she loved to think of their united happiness in Paradise.

Mrs. Thornton had once repeated to her Cowper's words:

“The son of parents who are in the skies,”

and Marion took their tender meaning to her heart. The child of parents in Paradise! that knowledge was of priceless comfort to the orphan child through all her after life.

She continued an inmate of the Thorntons' home, attending, daily, a select school for girls in the neighborhood, and becoming especially proficient in music, which bade fair to be the absorbing passion of her life. As Mrs. Thornton had a rich contralto voice, it was Marion's great pleasure to accompany “Aunt Rena's” songs with low melodies of her own devising; thus many happy evenings were spent, with Dr. Thornton for an appreciative audience. It was that gentleman's delight to sit of an evening beside the table where his newspapers lay for perusal at his leisure, smoking his pipe (the “rose pipe,” Marion called it on account of its shape), and listening to the music in the adjoining room; or, if it were summer time, and no business called him away, the windows were thrown open, and the veranda was at his disposal. Frequently some friend dropped

in for a chat; and, among others, John Seymour's thoughtful face was sometimes to be seen; or his deep voice to be heard, joining in some favorite song. It was a rare thing, however, that the young minister could find a spare evening from his many duties; and when such a time did chance to come, he was often too fatigued to make use of it, though the will was not wanting. His aunt's cordial welcome, the presence of the shy, fair-faced girl in her mourning dress, and the hearty sympathy of Dr. Thornton, made the house attractive to one often wearied with the endless round of formal visits, which his pastoral duty called upon him to perform.

CHAPTER VII.

Oh happy bond that seals my vows
To Him who merits all my love;
Let cheerful anthems fill His house,
While to His sacred throne I move.

—*Rev. Philip Doddridge.*

ONE day, late in March of the following year, Marion stood by the dining-room window, looking out upon the yard below, where the tender blades of grass were beginning to give a spring-like aspect to the place. Some modest violets were also budding forth, tinging the grass leaves with their purple hue.

The girl had but recently passed her fifteenth birthday; but her tall figure and rather pensive face gave the impression of a longer acquaintance with recurring spring-tides. She was standing half concealed by the heavy curtains, and thus her presence was unknown to the master and mistress of the house, who entered the room together, talking earnestly, but in subdued tones.

"She has never mentioned her feelings upon the subject to me, but I believe she intends to fulfil her baptismal vows. I would speak to her, but fear to force a decision which should come from the heart."

"And yet," answered the doctor, thoughtfully, "we are in a measure responsible. I feel that it is a special charge from above to help in some way the realization of her father's desire. But you may be right, my dear, we must do our best, and leave the rest to God." So saying, Dr. Thornton left the room.

It had come so suddenly upon Marion, the knowledge that she was the subject of their conversation, that she stood irresolute for the moment, and only the sound of the doctor's departing footsteps awoke her to a sense of her position as listener. The quick color rose to her cheeks at the suggestion of any deception upon her part, and hastily throwing aside the curtain, she stepped into the room, and approached Mrs. Thornton's chair with an agitated face.

"I didn't mean to listen, Aunt Rena; I really never thought you were speaking of me," she began.

Mrs. Thornton drew the girl to a chair beside her and answered affectionately:

“There is no harm done, dear. Indeed, I was just wishing for a talk with you.”

“Isn’t it about confirmation, auntie? I always wanted to be confirmed, but I thought, perhaps, I was too young yet;” she stopped, with an appealing look at her adopted mother.

“You must decide for yourself, my child. I do not think you are too young to realize the importance of the step; and, Marion, I know your desire to live near to Christ cannot be satisfied until you have confessed Him before the world.”

“It is my wish to do so,” was the low reply.

“Think well, darling, and pray over it, as you always do, I’ve no doubt, when you need to make a decision. We would feel thankful indeed to know that you are safe within the fold. It will be a safe-guard for the future, and I believe you will not regret the step. Think how glad they will be in heaven to know that the covenant of Baptism is sealed.”

Marion’s eyes glistened with unshed tears as she pressed Mrs. Thornton’s hand in her own.

“The Confirmation class meets every Friday

afternoon ; I will go with you, if you wish," continued that lady.

So it was arranged that Marion should attend these weekly classes ; and the girl's glad, earnest countenance, as the time of the Bishop's visit drew near, filled the household with a quiet joy.

Easter fell late that spring ; but the Lenten services had borne much fruit. On Palm Sunday, Marion was one of a large class presented by the white-haired minister, for the consecration of their lives to the service of Christ and His Church.

The church that witnessed the solemn scene, which is in itself ever new and momentous to the consecrated soul, was one of the oldest in Brooklyn. It was a long distance down town to Christ church from the Thornton's residence, but they had many sweet associations with it, and would have walked much farther to attend its hearty services. Dr. Thornton's thoughts strayed many times during the opening service to that death-bed of fifteen years ago ; to the young mother, dying in the faith ; to the white-robed father and the unconscious babe. Could it be the same little one who sat beside him, with pale, attentive face,

herself a woman, almost, in years? It was a fatherly hand that rested upon Marion's trembling fingers, as the candidates were asked to come forward to the chancel rail; and with a mother's tenderness, Mrs. Thornton laid aside the girl's simple black straw hat, with its wreath of snowdrops, and watched the slender form move up the aisle, and take its place with the others waiting there.

It was in truth the consummation of the many prayers and hopes which had followed Marion from her birth.

The soft, subdued light, that came through the stained glass windows, was in keeping with the hush that fell upon the congregation as the Confirmation service proceeded.

The Bishop's voice was heard distinctly to the farthest corner, as, with the laying on of hands, he prayed for each newly pledged soul the prayer that never fails to touch an answering chord in the hearts of the hearers.

“Defend, O Lord, this, Thy child with Thy heavenly grace, that she may continue Thine forever, and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more

and more, until she come to Thine everlasting kingdom."

Many bowed heads in the congregation felt again the touch of the holy hands that years ago were laid upon them, when, in the freshness of life's morning, they had taken their stand within the Ark of God. To many it was a renewal of the solemn vows which human frailty, alas ! so often breaks in weakness, but which the power of Christ's love redeems from failure, bringing the wanderer again and again to the mercy-seat. Some, too, there were in that listening throng, still without the fold, who yet longed for that prayer to be said over them, straying far on life's tempestuous way.

The world's great poet has truly said:

"All indistinctly apprehend a bliss,
On which the soul may rest."

What is that bliss of the soul but the love of the Creator, which alone can satisfy the created?

The covenant was sealed with outward sign and inward grace. A calm light shone upon the fair face so lately tremulous with tears, and Marion, with many others, had begun the pilgrimage which Christian once courageously entered

upon; where Christian found the Hill of Difficulty and the Slough of Despond; but where, too, he left his burden at the foot of the Cross, rested in the House Beautiful, and reached at length the city of the living God. It was but the beginning of the end, and Apollyon waited near. But in vain the enemy's watch, when the Lord of Hosts keepeth the citadel.

The first Communion on Easter morning was fraught with sweetness for them all. The quiet streets along which they passed, the morning light breaking over the silent city, the solemn hush within the church, the pure Annunciation lilies against the bank of dark green leaves; all these influences combined to fill the heart with peaceful gladness on that Easter morn.

“The Lord is risen,” was the theme of every heart, though few spoke the joyful word; a hush was upon the lips of the throng.

“Drink this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and be thankful.”

“Thankful!” It was the keynote of the day. The promised Presence of the Lord was felt by those who knelt in silence at His table.

“I wonder if there ever will be such another

Easter day!" It was Marion who spoke in a low tone, as she seated herself on the sofa beside Mrs. Thornton that same Sunday evening. The day had been as beautiful and spring-like as could be desired; the Easter music was still ringing in their ears. They had decided to spend the evening quietly at home, as the Sunday school celebration that afternoon had required their presence, both as teacher and scholar, and they felt the need of rest.

Mrs. Thornton broke the momentary silence following Marion's remark by saying softly:

"Yes, there will one day be a more glorious Easter than we have ever seen.. Think what it will be when

“‘The strife is o'er, the battle done,
The victory of life is won,
The song of triumph is begun.’

"Remember, Marion, that for us the battle is but begun," and he who would follow in His train—we know the answer well—must patiently bear His cross below."

"It does not seem so hard, auntie, when we think of His presence being with us always," and

Marion's face wore a look of peace which no thought of future cloud could mar.

There was, indeed, very little to trouble Marion in that happy home, where the days glided smoothly by, each bringing its allotted tasks which love made easy to perform. Her life had known sorrow in the sense of bereavement; but in another, and perhaps the hardest sense, she had never tasted the bitter cup; always there had been some protecting friend to guide her pathway; and her sunny nature had not failed to find response in the affections of those about her. Frequent letters from Jessica Lynn kept her informed of the news of Newberg, dear old Newberg! already it seemed like a dream, so many events crowding out the memory of those quiet days with her grandmother and Olivia, in the home now occupied by people who were strangers to their past.

And Frank Wilton had entered the naval academy at Annapolis. Jessica wrote that he was quite grown up, and was even coaxing a mustache! "How very absurd it is!" thought Marion, as she read the letter. "I wonder what Claude will do? he's such a mischief; I'm afraid

he'll never settle down to anything. Jessica says he is as full of fun and freckles as ever. How I would like to see them all again."

When school was over, Dr. Thornton himself took her for a glimpse of Hudson scenery, and it ended by his leaving his ward to spend a month with her friends in Newberg.

It was a very pleasant re-union with her former playmates; and Marion even learned not to mind the pious roll of Mr. Wilton's eyes which she had dreaded as a child. The minister's wife was the same cheery, bright-faced woman, always busy in her household with her children around her. If Marion noticed now that there was something lacking of the innate refinement to which she had grown accustomed, a little narrowing of the Thornton's horizon, she ascribed it to the larger sphere in which the latter moved.

But horizons are not limited, they widen into space; the purer the atmosphere, the higher are the heavens; and this atmosphere can exist in the tiniest circle as well as within the broadest zones. It was, perhaps, this indefinable difference which made Marion find Claude the most companionable of his family. He lacked the polish of manner

which Frank had inherited from his father; but there was a genuineness of feeling, a frankness of speech which rendered him more of a universal favorite than his brother.

“You see, Marion, I’m just the same bashful boy, and as handsome as ever,” were the laughing words after they had exchanged greetings.

He secretly worshipped the ground she walked on, and would have put himself to any trouble to do either of the girls a service; but he dreaded being teased, like all boys of sixteen years of age.

Frank, on the other hand, was gallantry itself. He was at home for the summer holidays, and his cadet suit became him well; he was really a fine-looking young man, if Dr. Thornton did say he was “a pretty boy,” which phrase made Frank’s ears tingle for many days thereafter.

Jessica was smaller than Marion, and was also a contrast in coloring; her light hair, brown eyes, and soft complexion promising a style of beauty more attractive to many, than Marion’s statelier presence.

Maude was still another type, being a veritable “nut-brown maid,” as her father called her; brown eyes, brown hair, brown skin, but with a dash of

brilliant color that relieved the sameness. Being four years their junior, she was still a playful child, the pet and romp of the three families; and she viewed the other girls with the admiration due young ladies in their teens.

All too quickly the month sped by; the boating, and fishing, and the picnics had been endless sources of amusement; but Mrs. Thornton had written that they would spend a month in the Adirondacks, and it was necessary for Marion to return to Brooklyn, to prepare for this second trip.

CHAPTER VIII.

The human heart asks love.

—*Frances Ridley Havergal.*

MISS Adelaide Roy was one morning, in the early part of June, wandering from room to room of her handsomely furnished suite of apartments, in a house on one of the streets that cross Rhode Island Avenue. A restless mood was upon her, for it was the day appointed for Marion's coming, and it yet wanted several hours before the time for that young lady's arrival.

The aunt had spent days in planning and fitting up the room which her niece was to occupy. It was on the same side of the apartments as her own, and a door formed means of communication between the two chambers. In contrast to the almost severe simplicity of her bed chamber, with its old-fashioned walnut furniture brought from the New England homestead, Marion's room was

furnished in oak, the ceiling and walls tinted pale blue, which was the predominating color in the hangings of the bed and windows. Exquisitely dainty was the taste displayed throughout; and even Marion never knew the love and thought expended there.

Upon the shelves of the small revolving book-case, was a selection of choice volumes; among others, a copy of Shakespeare, bound in calf, which had belonged to the twin sisters in their girlhood days, and which for many years Miss Roy had kept in readiness for the little Marion's coming.

The only ornaments upon the polished mantel were two Venetian vases, filled with fresh flowers, and, in the centre, a bronze clock. The bureau, with its appointments, the washstand with its blue-rimmed toilet set, the round work-table, over which was draped a fringed scarf of olive China silk, the cool matting—it was no wonder the lady looked her satisfaction at the result of her work. It showed a combination of taste and practical wisdom, rarely to be found, even among women. An artist's eye was hers, but the

woman's hand had carried into effect the pictures of the brain.

Over the mantel hung a landscape in oils, painted by Miss Roy some years ago, and representing a woodland scene near the ancestral home. She wished, as far as possible, and in an indirect way, to lead the girl's thoughts to that old life of which she, as yet, knew almost nothing.

Crossing the hall, Miss Roy entered the sitting-room opposite, which served also as a *salle a manger* for the informal parties often gathered within these rooms. The heavy portieres of the winter season had been taken down, which left an unobstructed view of the parlor.

Pausing to converse a moment with the African parrot, perched in his cage near the window, she took a rapid survey of the two rooms, then, moving swiftly towards the piano, she began looking over the music-folio.

"Marion must be a musician," was the low murmur, as she turned the pages slowly, "no Roy was ever unmusical. I shall teach her myself, and have no annoyance about schools, or governesses, to go through with."

So her thoughts wandered on in plans for the

future, for Marion's instruction, and Marion's amusement. In the midst of her musings, the sitting-room door opened, and luncheon was announced.

An hour later, Miss Roy was on her way to the Sixth Street depot, to await the arrival of the New York Express. The train came in, and, yes! there was Dr. Thornton's portly figure coming up the platform, and Marion, in her dark dress, walking beside him. Greetings were exchanged, and soon the three were driving rapidly along the smooth streets of Washington to Marion's new home. Arrived there, the travelers rested in the cool parlor, and refreshments were promptly served. Then Dr. Thornton took his leave, after repeating to his ward the oft-spoken instructions to write frequently, and to consider his house her home; to all which the girl listened eagerly, and Miss Roy, with polite acquiescence. It would take time, she knew, for Marion to become used to her new surroundings, and feel that this was her true home.

"You will come to see me often, won't you, Uncle Hugh?" Marion said, wistfully, clinging

to that gentleman's hand, and following him to the door.

"Yes, dear child. I want you always to think of me as your father's friend, and in some measure hoping to fill his place to you. Remember," he added, in a low voice, "I am your godfather, and must entreat you to keep in mind your baptismal vows. You are 'a child of the covenant,' little girl."

"I will remember," she answered, earnestly.

"To-day I shall see a friend in the city here, rector of the nearest of the churches, and he will come to see you soon, I trust," added Dr. Thornton.

"Thank you, uncle," and again her arms were about his neck, in a farewell embrace.

Her aunt took her to the sweet room awaiting her, and Marion would have been ungrateful, indeed, not to have appreciated the thoughtful preparations for her comfort and enjoyment. An exclamation of delight escaped her as she entered the pretty bed-chamber, and her pleasure in its beauty of arrangement increased as her eyes rested upon the little book-case, and the flowers on the mantel.

“Oh, auntie, you are too kind,” she said, joyously, forgetting her grief at the recent parting, in her enjoyment of the present pleasure.

Miss Roy accepted the demonstration smilingly.

“I wish you to be happy here, my dear, and feel at home with me. This room shall be your sanctum when you are tired of my company.”

This idea brought an answering smile to the girl’s face, and, after her aunt’s departure, she sank upon the low couch by the curtained window, and contemplated her recent journey, and surroundings. Gradually these things became unaccountably mingled in confused vision, and soon she was fast asleep.

Miss Roy came once to the door, and looked in upon the sleeper. Marion had substituted a soft, white wrapper, for her travelling dress, and lay with one hand resting on the arm of the sofa, the other under her flushed cheek, while her abundant hair fell unconfin’d upon the cushion. After one long look, the aunt withdrew softly, and the girl slept on until late in the afternoon. Refreshed by her slumbers, she arose, and opened the blinds that looked out upon the park at a short distance from the corner of the house.

The magnolia buds were bursting into a mass of white bloom, and their fragrance was wafted to her, as she breathed the evening air.

“Is it not delicious?” she heard her aunt’s voice saying, as a friendly hand was laid upon each shoulder.

“It is, indeed. Am I very late?” she asked, turning away from the window.

“Oh, no; there is time for you to dress before dinner. I came in to tell you, and to see if you needed anything. Your trunk is in this room, which I keep for a general store-room,” and throwing open a door on the farther side, Miss Roy displayed a small room, where half-a-dozen trunks and boxes were arranged along the wall.

“It is very convenient,” said Marion, stooping to unlock her trunk, and taking therefrom a white mull dress for evening wear.

“I am glad you are wearing white this summer; mourning is very oppressive. I have worn it myself for several years, but this evening will put on a gray gown in your honor.”

“You were in mourning for your father, were you not, Aunt Adelaide?”

“My father, and your grandfather, Marion,” was the reply, and Miss Roy sighed deeply.

“Yes, I meant that,” said the girl, hurriedly. “I want you to tell me all about him, and about my mother. You must have been happy together when you were girls. I think it would be so pleasant to have a sister,” she added, wistfully.

“Yes, we were always together when we were young girls. But it is time for you to dress now. Come into my room when you are ready.”

A half an hour later, Marion knocked timidly at her aunt’s door. It was opened instantly by that lady, whose handsome figure showed to advantage in the evening toilet of gray silk, with white trimmings. Marion, herself, deserved her aunt’s half-murmured compliment. She looked indeed, a “white rose,” just when its petals begin to open to the light, and suggest depths of loveliness yet unrevealed.

They descended the stairs together, and passed out of the hall into an adjoining house, where Miss Roy took her meals; around the long table was assembled what, to Marion’s bewildered eyes, appeared a host of strangers, before whom she felt an insignificant child; there were, in reality,

about thirty persons, some living in the house, and others merely table boarders, gathered for the evening meal. The girl followed Miss Roy to the place assigned her, and found herself seated between her aunt and a young girl her senior by perhaps one year, with whom she soon became acquainted, and Marion soon found that Miss Brooke was the daughter of a naval officer, and during the latter's absence abroad, was boarding temporarily in Washington with her mother, a pale-faced woman who sat on their right.

The sense of strangeness began to wear off, as she listened to Pauline Brooke's account of the places she had visited, and her acquaintances in the city. The house was kept by the widow of a naval officer, who was a charming hostess, as well as a true-hearted woman; being left with the care of an aged mother, and a daughter of fifteen to educate, she had gone bravely to work, and opened this house for boarders, many of her friends of more prosperous days being among her "guests," as they liked to be called. Mrs. Woodruff had collected, in her travels with her husband, many beautiful pictures, and dainty knicknacks, which went far to make her house attractive to

cultured people; the table, too, was always exquisite in its appointments, dainty china being the one weakness in which she allowed herself to indulge; a weakness which her boarders considered an additional charm to the many good qualities of the hostess.

In the pauses of the conversation between the two young girls, Marion caught fragments of the talk around her. Miss Roy, and a German professor opposite her, were having an animated discussion over the merits of a new opera, which was exciting a *furore* in the musical world.

The professor was a small, wiry man, with very blonde hair and mustache; he had a way of taking off his eye-glasses when he wished to emphasize a statement, then hurriedly readjusting them, oftentimes to the detriment of his short, and somewhat aspiring, nose. Marion found great entertainment in furtively watching the eye-glass process.

Miss Roy and the professor were friends of some years' standing, and enjoyed an occasional war of words, invariably ending in that gentleman's retiring from the combat with the amicable statement:

“Well, Mees Roy, we are of the same opinion in the main, which is only differently expressed. There must be allowance made for difference of expression always.” Then seeing the twinkle of triumph in his antagonist’s steel blue eyes, he would hastily change the topic of conversation to one of more trivial import.

Dinner over, all dispersed to their different apartments, Pauline Brooke having expressed her intention of “calling very soon;” she had taken a fancy to Miss Roy’s niece, which Marion seemed to reciprocate.

That evening was spent in looking over some music with her aunt, and listening enraptured to the voice which had so often swayed the hearts of the listeners.

“Yes, Marion possessed the Roy trait, a passionate love of music; and her aunt was pleased to find how thoroughly the girl understood the principles of music, and with what expression she played. As yet her voice was undeveloped, but, though sweet in tone, it could never equal her aunt’s in compass.

In the midst of one of the songs, in walked the professor on tip-toe, motioning to Marion

not to betray his presence to her aunt; but the parrot, who had just waked up from a nap, sang out in a disgusted tone: "There he is again!" and Miss Roy stopped to laugh at the *in-apropos* remark. She was induced, however, to finish the song, the professor meanwhile brandishing his cane at his enemy, sulking in its cage.

Later, he took possession of the piano, and played in such a magnificent manner that Marion held her breath with excitement. Chopin's waltzes trickled from his fingers like drops of water from a sparkling spring, and ever and anon the clear notes of some pathetic strain filled the soul with infinite longing. Suddenly the music ceased, and the little man turned to catch the look of intense listening upon the fair young face; the girl's hands were clasped nervously.

"Aha! the young Mees is a music lover too, I see. Would she like the old professor sometimes to help her comprehend the great masters?"

Marion looked toward her aunt.

"It is a great honor the professor does you, Marion. I soould be happy to know that you are under his training, but I fear to tax his time."

"Not for a friend, Mees Roy, is there to be

mentioned of taxing time; but it is not often one sees so much music in a face. It is a long time since I taught music, Mees Martyn, but I consider it an honor to once again have a pupil to mould after my own thought," and the little man bowed with his glasses in one hand, and a music roll in the other.

"I thank you," was the simple reply.

So Marion's musical education bade fair to rival even that of her aunt's anticipation.

CHAPTER IX.

THE clergyman of whom Dr. Thornton had made mention to his niece, called within the week following her arrival; and having previously heard Marion's history from her guardian, was prepared to become her friend and spiritual adviser. But, despite his efforts, and Marion's evident pleasure upon seeing him, Miss Roy's presence and cool politeness served as a barrier to any personal conversation with the young girl; and the minister took his leave, feeling that he had gained but little by his visit, yet trusting to future opportunities to win Marion's confidence.

She wished to attend the Friday afternoon Bible class to which he had invited her, and her aunt made no objection to her going; but in some unaccountable way those particular afternoons seemed always filled up, either in doing some important shopping, or going by special

request from Miss Roy to return some call that could be made at no other time.

The Church services had always been very dear to the girl, and she could not bear to miss them. Sunday seemed like any other day at Miss Roy's; and though Marion attended church regularly every Sunday morning, the afternoons were given up to receiving visitors informally, and the girl could scarcely keep aloof from these pleasant gatherings that seemed harmless in themselves, but left little time for the quiet hour of reading to which she had been accustomed.

She felt a sense of loss, yet was unable to redeem the time thus unprofitably spent as far as religious development was concerned. Often, in the midst of the circle where displays of wit and brilliancy could scarcely fail to dazzle and attract her unsophisticated mind, she would feel an irrepressible regret for the quiet, yet happy, Sunday evenings with Mrs. Thornton and the doctor; in place of the light songs she now heard, there would often ring in her ears the echo of some familiar hymn, whose peaceful beauty had appealed to her higher, spiritual nature.

But Marion was young, and naturally fond of

society; then, too, she did not realize the gradual breaking up of the old associations. Things that would have shocked her religious senses in the past, seemed but slight transgressions of the law, when applied to the aunt whose talents she admired, and who was gaining over her young mind an ascendancy of which the girl herself was but little aware.

Yet, despite the laxity of outward forms, she never lost her child-like faith in God, and in a personal Saviour. Morning and night her petitions arose to the throne of grace; and there was One who slumbered not, but kept eternal watch about the fair young soul, exposed to the perilous darts of its adversaries.

One afternoon, shortly after Marion's arrival in Washington, Pauline Brooke came to call, and when the heat of the day had lessened, the two girls walked out together. Marion felt keen interest in exploring the broad avenues, and the picturesque parks in the immediate vicinity of their residence; it seemed delightfully airy and quiet after the rush and din of New York; indeed, Brooklyn itself was lively in comparison. There was, however, a look of comfort about the presi-

dential city, and, at this season, especially, the air was redolent with the fragrance of blossoming plants and trees. Something of the Southern grace and languor attached itself to this meeting place of the nation's representatives; a breath, perhaps of the old Dominion skirting the city's rapidly-spreading boundaries.

Miss Brooke was full of eager anticipation of her father's home-coming; for he had recently been appointed the captain in charge of the Navy Yard; and the two young friends planned many happy days to be spent in that beautifully-ordered home of the Washington Navy during the coming season. In the meantime, they would be separated for the summer months, as the Roys were going to the country in a few days.

Upon her return to the house, Marion found Miss Roy entertaining a visitor, a tall, broad-shouldered man, whose kind face was framed in a setting of thick gray hair, and flowing beard of somewhat whiter hue. His small, keen eyes had in them a shrewd twinkle, suggestive of good-humored intelligence, which softened perceptibly as Miss Roy introduced him to her niece as "my very best friend, Mr. Hallowell."

“And your oldest,” added that gentleman, smiling, as he returned Marion’s greeting with a cordial hand shake. “Your aunt looks upon me as a patriarch, so you must consent to be the patriarch’s great niece,” he continued, furtively scanning the young girl’s countenance, as if striving to place her likeness to some well-known face. (He had known Marion’s mother and grandmother before her.)

Marion soon found that this was the friend who kept Miss Roy’s library supplied with the rarest books of the old style, as well as the latest novelties of the literary world. His home was in Chicago, the city of John Seymour’s nativity, and Marion found herself listening eagerly to descriptions of that great western metropolis which Mrs. Thornton so much loved.

“Some day,” said Miss Roy, “we shall take a trip through the great West, when Marion has finished school, perhaps.”

“Then I shall take pleasure in showing you around our city; and you can take a look at my library. I think it contains every book you could mention, and many you would not be apt to call to mind.”

Mr. Hallowell was connected with a large publishing house in Chicago, and his library was his hobby, a commendable one, it must be admitted. His stay in the East was brief, and the time was mostly occupied in discussing a work on botany which Miss Roy was to send him for publication; it was finally agreed that at the close of the summer, the promised book should be forthcoming, the authoress pleading for time to give the work a more careful revision.

The following week, Miss Roy and her niece left the city for a quiet country neighborhood some thirty miles distant, in Virginia. Miss Roy had chosen this sequestered farming district that she might find time for her literary work, and Marion have opportunity to gather roses in her cheeks, while she breathed the pure country air. The house was a comfortable, gray stone building of remote date, whose original owners belonged to a branch of an aristocratic family, some members of which had played an important part in the history of the state; the last of the name who had owned this estate had lived and died a bachelor. His property passing into other hands, had been sold to an industrious farmer

from Michigan, under whose energetic management it suffered no detriment; on the contrary, it was a model farm for many miles around. His wife and two daughters (the younger, Marion's age) took equal pride in keeping up the home-stead, and often pointed out to visitors a certain window pane, upon which was scratched the name of the last owner of the place. The house was surrounded by shade trees, and to the northward was a large apple-orchard. Beyond the rolling hills on the west, the dark ranges of the Bull Run mountains were overtopped by the Blue Ridge, whose pale outline appeared as a misty reflection of the sky.

The Hudson scenery might be grander, Marion thought, but it could not have a more peaceful beauty than this which greeted her eyes, as she looked from her window soon after the arrival of the travellers at "Buena Vista."

It did not take many days to become acquainted with the home and its inmates. They had few near neighbors; but this was rather an advantage, Miss Roy thought. Her days were spent in rambling over the farm, examining the wild flowers, and giving the girls object lessons

in botany. It was some time before Marion could overcome her repugnance to the idea of dissecting the flowers, which she loved as emblems of the beautiful and pure; but gradually her desire to know their history overcame this distaste, and she caught botanical phrases from her aunt with a readiness which caused that lady secret amusement.

Their morning walks were frequently alone, as the farmer's daughters were occupied with household duties; it was during these rambles that there often came to Marion, with painful force, the knowledge that while the works of nature were, to her, fresh proofs of the wonderful power of God, they were, to her aunt, but a part of the material world, possessed of beauty as unmeaning as that of the cold crystal of the "inorganic kingdom." Between the crystal and the flower, with its life-germ, exists as wide a difference as lies between the material and the spiritual worlds. Such thoughts often came confusedly into the young mind, the seed of future spiritual harvest; but no word relating to this difference of their inner lives passed between them; Marion felt incompetent to express her

belief in words, and her aunt held in honor her promise not to use undue influence over the girl. Truth was a strong element in Adelaide Roy's composition; her convictions were honest in their owner's light, and therefore she upheld them with proud and stern tenacity.

For Marion, she believed that in time the girl would outgrow the "superstitions" of her youth.

Once, when pleaded with by her dead sister, Adelaide had replied; "My heart might consent, but my reason never could," and that so-called reason was the keynote of her life thereafter. In spite of the silence maintained upon religious subjects, both aunt and niece felt a painful consciousness of this mutual reserve; there can be no true confidence between the Christian and the atheist, however honest each may be, for life is viewed by each from a widely different point of view. Take Christ away, and the mainspring of the Christian's life is gone, the motive of his existence is destroyed.

Marion found one friend in the house with whom she could talk upon this subject. Lucy Freer, the farmer's oldest daughter, was the only member of the family who had made a profession of religion. The father and mother belonged to

that large class of persons, not hostile, but indifferent, to religion in any form, yet of correct moral principles, and steady habits. When Lucy expressed her desire to become a Christian, her father had simply advised her to "wait a while," and then left the matter to his daughter's decision. And Lucy had decided for herself. She was in earnest in this, as in every work of her life, and for three years she had gone bravely on, alone in her belief, but always hoping and praying that her family might be brought into the fold. Over Alice, her junior by several years, she had watched with unremitting devotion, yet so far with little outward result. They were so opposite in their tastes and dispositions, it was difficult for them to fully understand each other's feelings, although their love for each other was sound at the core. Lucy, the burden-bearer, was of an outspoken, determined nature; one who would go through any amount of hardship without a murmur. Alice, the pet, was of a more sensitive temperament, more inclined to moods of playful wilfulness, or of temporary despondency, than her sister. The latter's calm, practical mind found it

difficult to understand the younger sister's capriciousness.

It was into this family that Marion was introduced, and she formed, as it were, a connecting link between the sisters. Of Alice's age, and sharing her love for the ideal in life, Marion's training, and the peculiar circumstances of her childhood, had given her a thoughtfulness beyond her years, and, as before stated, there was one strong bond which cemented her friendship for the older sister, and helped her to realize the latter's difficult position.

In the afternoon, Marion and Alice took long rides together around the farm, or to the neighboring village. The country girl here had decidedly the advantage, and merry was the laughter over Marion's attempts at horsemanship. It was not long, however, before she learned the art, for fearlessness, the chief requisite, was a part of Marion's nature. To this was added a love for animals, especially horses, which was usually reciprocated by these dumb, but otherwise intelligent creatures.

At the dairy, too, Marion was welcome. This was Lucy's province, and the skill with

which she worked and printed the pats of golden butter, was an unfailing source of wonder and admiration to the city-bred girl. The spring house, through which gurgled a clear streamlet, was a pleasant place of a summer morning, both to the worker and the on-looker.

Within the house Alice had fitted up a studio. It was a small room at the end of the hall up stairs, where the girl kept her drawings, and sketches of her favorite nooks on the farm. She had taken lessons from a good artist, and her work showed promise. To Marion, who had no talent in that direction, making pictures seemed as wonderful as working butter; and her praises were a help to Alice, who often felt the need of encouragement, however partial.

On the whole, the summer was passing pleasantly for them all. The busy, active life of these country girls did not prevent cultivation of the mind, as Marion had been inclined to think would be the case. Indeed, their healthy pursuits served as a tonic to her, physically and mentally, and she began to long for a share in their usefulness. The contact of these three young natures, with their varied bent, widened their lives per-

ceptibly. To Marion, especially, young companionship was invaluable at this period of her life.

Two miles from Buena Vista was a small frame church, where Church services were held weekly. The scant population of the surrounding country made up a straggling congregation, increased somewhat in the summer months by the exodus from the city. Lucy had recently taken active part in trying to build up a Sunday school, and some success had attended the labors of the "faithful few." She had now a class of ten boys, in whose welfare she took the deepest interest. Marion often accompanied her to the church, and before the summer was ended, felt a personal love for the quiet chapel on the hill. It was a glimpse of heavenly beauty, the blue sky gleaming through the foliage of the trees outside the open windows, and the "peace which passeth understanding," seemed borne to her upon the soft, summer breezes.

In every soul there dwells a longing for the "temple without hands, eternal in the heavens," and surrounded by the beauties of nature's God, the believing heart should sing with deeper meaning its "Nearer, my God, to thee." Alas! that it

is too often otherwise. To Marion, the familiar service came as a friendly voice of her childhood. The minister's clear tones fell like an echo of music upon her ears. What was it in his voice that recalled the past? Again and again, she strove to bring back some memory that constantly eluded the grasp of her will. Suddenly, like a flash of lightning, it came to her—the remembrance of words spoken in her father's tender voice: "Yes, darling, God loves us both." Strange truth, this similarity of voices between persons of different blood and clime, a likeness which often brings back the memory of our loved ones more forcibly than mere facial resemblance.

CHAPTER X.

NEW YEAR'S DAY had dawned, but not in the bright crispness of a clear winter morning, as had been the hope of some young hearts in the city, who had been eagerly looking forward to this time of festivity. Among others, Marion and Pauline were to assist at the Commodore's reception. Commodore and Mrs. Levering had planned a "rosebud" reception, as their only daughter was still of tender age, and their son, Harold, of the naval academy, was to be at home for the occasion. Mrs. Levering was always charmed to have around her a party of young people; already she had found out Pauline and her friend, and they had been informal visitors at her house. Vivacious and charming of manner, the Commodore's wife was a favorite in society at large, as well as in her own immediate neighborhood. Her husband, a tall, fine-looking man of some sixty years of age, had abroad the reputation

of sternness, but in his own home his bearing was tender and courteous.

Within doors, that New Year's day, all was warmth and light, the shutters being drawn, and the gas lighted; a bevy of young girls between the ages of sixteen and twenty, surrounded their hostess in the front parlor. In the lower end of the room, potted plants from the greenhouse gave a tropical effect to the scene, and strains of music from players in the background, added to the enchantment of the place. Outside, the streets were slippery with ice, and few persons were to be seen battling with the wind and sleet. Gradually, as the day wore on, the more venturesome braved the storm, and peal after peal was heard at the door-bell. Marion stood next Mrs. Levering, and was engaged in a laughing rivalry with her young companions, as to which should take out the greatest number of callers for refreshments. The novelty of the occasion, and her thorough enjoyment of the company, had brought a flush to her cheeks, and lighted her eyes with brilliancy. So the evening wore away, and the New Year, with its unknown joys and sorrows, was fully ushered in.

Marion's life that winter, thanks to Miss Roy's good common sense, continued as before, the mornings being filled up with her studies under the direction of her aunt, while the professor guided the musical department "after his own heart," as he expressed it, which meant for Marion hours of practising, interspersed with bits of interesting music from her teacher.

It was not until the following winter, after a summer spent at a well-known watering-place, that the girl was fairly launched in society; then followed a season of gaiety, when she had need of all her strength, physical and mental, to keep up with the ceaseless round of parties and receptions into which, "for Marion's sake," Miss Roy suffered herself and her niece to be drawn. Pauline's previous year of initiation proved invaluable in a certain way; she was a popular girl, not intellectual, but possessed of a superficial brightness which made her appear above the average, and a droll amiability that softened the keenness of her wit.

Marion entered on the new life with the enthusiasm of youth. But can the moth approach the candle and not singe its wings? Inevitably

the girl was dazzled by the glitter of the light, and fluttered near the dangerous flames. Thanks to her inheritance of love and purity, to her early training, and to the memory of a truer life, she shrank from the contact.

“Pauline,” she said one day, “do you know there is one thing that worries me about these parties? If one could just choose the persons one likes and approves of, it would be so pleasant; but to be obliged to talk to those of whom one disapproves, and appear pleased with them because they are rich or great, seems such a mockery.”

“Don’t disturb your sweet soul, child, about other people’s sins. We must take life as it comes, and enjoy the sweets while we can,” and Miss Brooke settled herself back with an air of satisfaction. “For my part, I think it is a passably charming world on the whole, if one will take it as one finds it. Of course there will be snobs everywhere, but what of it? It would be a Herculean task to reform society, *mon amie*, and one not to be undertaken by two young women freshly launched upon its dangerous waves;” and Pauline watched her friend’s face with some anxiety. Lately she had noticed a

disposition on Marion's part to sift trivial matters through a superfine sieve.

Marion made no reply, and the subject was dropped for the time. There rankled in her mind a discussion which had lately occurred between herself and a young lawyer, who visited them occasionally. He was a man of polished manners, and elegant appearance; but his smooth, evenly rounded speeches, veiling sarcasm that seemed to Marion intentional, impressed the girl unfavorably. Yet she could not account for her aversion, she simply felt it. Pauline liked him, and he visited at Captain Brooke's more frequently than elsewhere. On a recent occasion, when Marion was staying at the Navy Yard, Mr. Lennox had called. During the course of conversation, the question was propounded by him: "Is a man legally responsible for a moral wrong?"

The lawyer suavely argued for the negative, until his auditors felt that in a worldly sense, at least, he had won the case; but Marion Martyn could not overlook the fact, that while one may not be responsible to the law of man for moral wrong, there was a higher law by which he must be held accountable, or else the foundations of

society are undermined. What most troubled her, was the utter ignoring of the power of that higher law, by one well-versed in the lower. Every now and then, the recurrence of that question haunted her mind, only to be banished by other thoughts which came at this time to engross her.

Her affection for Jessica Lynn had never lessened, despite their long separation, and the different circumstances which surrounded their lives. In the letters which they wrote each other, they continued to exchange confidences as in former days; and Marion knew from the tone of her friend's epistles, that Frank Wilton's avowed attachment for the doctor's daughter was the one absorbing theme of the girl's quiet life. Yet here was Frank, dangling at Pauline's side, apparently oblivious of the sweet, fair, young life which lived in the thought of him in the far-off Newberg. And Marion was powerless to save the one friend in her dread of injuring the other. She breathed more freely now that Frank's vacation was over.

He and Harold Levering were both ordered off on their first cruise; and, for more than one

reason, Marion felt relieved as the appointed day of departure drew near. Harold had lately shown a decided preference for her society, a wish for more than a friend's place in her affections; and, while she felt the woman's natural pleasure in being the object of his adoration, she was too uncertain of her own heart, to wish matters to be brought to a crisis. It was pleasanter to go on in the old friendly way; to be able to depend on Harold without feeling that he required more than a friendly word, and smile, for his services. He was of a quiet, reticent disposition, and possessed a depth of character which Marion appreciated, in proportion as she realized the shallowness of many of the young men with whom she was daily thrown. She felt that he was a friend worth keeping, yet the thought of him as a possible lover was distasteful to her. So, with a vague hope that all would go on in the old way, and that their friendship would be kept up by the medium of letter-writing, when each would have much of interest to write the other, Marion put from her mind the day of decision, and lived on in the enjoyment of the present.

It was on the evening of his departure, that

Harold Levering found himself in the Roy parlor, having come to bid Marion adieu. The flowers he had sent her a few hours earlier, were arranged in a dainty glass bowl on the flower-stand beside him. He had chosen the creamy-tinted roses which she loved; and as he sat looking at them, and waiting for her coming, he determined anew to learn his fate. His voice trembled slightly as he arose to meet her; and Marion looking into his troubled face, knew that the dreaded hour had come. He did not relinquish her hand, but strove to read the unspoken answer in the clear eyes that looked so frankly into his.

“Marion, I am come to say good-bye. Tell me that there is hope for me, that I may look forward to my home-coming, and know that your love awaits me.”

Marion’s face grew paler as she gently withdrew her hand.

“Oh, Mr. Levering, I am sorry. I hoped we might keep on with the old friendship, at least until we knew our own hearts.” The distress in her voice increased as she spoke, for Marion felt that she was giving pain to one who truly loved her.

“Know our own hearts!” he repeated, “you do not care for me, or you would not say that. For me, I can never change; but I will wait, and hope. Oh, my love, you do not know how your truth and loveliness have sustained me these two years; how my love for you absorbs my every thought, waking or dreaming.”

“I dare not tell you to hope,” was the low reply, “it would be more unkind, although you may not see it now.”

The tenderness in her voice soothed his despair.

“I am satisfied to wait, so long as no one else has won your heart—wait and work. Yes, I will work for your approbation, if I may not win your love; and I would not have it unless freely given,” he added, proudly, but with a wistful glance which went to her heart.

“I seem to have no love to give,” she answered, sadly, “but I shall think of you often, and miss you from my life.”

“Thank you for those words,” he answered, gravely. “Is there anything I can do, any last service for you before I leave? And you will let me write?”

“Yes,” she replied, “there is one favor I want

to ask of you. Something which will be a lasting service to others as well as to me. It is about Frank Wilton," she began, hesitatingly, and then followed Jessica's story, which no one but herself knew; but she trusted the confidence of the man to whom she told it.

" You may rely on me to influence him as far as possible. He is a fine fellow in many ways; but you and I know that he lacks strength of character. Ah, what a treasure he is throwing away—a woman's undivided love. He knows not its priceless value. Good-night, and good-bye. Bid me 'God-speed,' my friend!"

"I do, with all my heart; and believe that whatever you may be called on to endure, the strength will be given you to go bravely onward."

CHAPTER XI.

Ah! it is you; with that brow of truth,
Ever too pure for the least disguise,
With the same dear smile on the loving mouth,
And the same sweet light in the tender eyes.

—*Phœbe Cary.*

ONCE again, Marion Martyn stood in the familiar room in the Brooklyn house; in the room where the associations of childhood, and the remembrance of her grandmother, crowded upon her over-poweringly. Four years had passed since she bade farewell to the Thornton's home, which had been hers in the truest sense of the word; and now she stood by the window as she had been used to do, the same, yet not the same, being.

She was spending her twentieth birthday with her old friends; merely a flying visit to New York, as her aunt could not spare her long at a time; the dependence of the elder woman upon the idolized niece had increased with the years,

and the separation of even a week's time was painful to Miss Roy. "Something the heart must have, to love and to cherish," and, for Marion, the proud heart stooped low in its love. Especially was Miss Roy jealous of Mrs. Thornton's influence; and Marion, who felt towards the latter a daughter's affection, was careful to avoid exciting this jealousy, for fear of an estrangement arising between the families.

This yearly visit to Brooklyn was the one right she insisted upon, claiming it as proof of her continued esteem for her guardian. She stood looking out upon the fitful March day, the clouds driving furiously across the heavens, and the wind whistling around the corners of the streets. The girl apparently partook but little of the stormy nature of her birth-month, so calm and gentle was the face uplifted to the wind-swept sky; but there were soul-depths stirring within that pure breast, and shining from her dark eyes.

The day of "sweet sixteen," when our grandmothers were in the zenith of youth's beauty and power, has given place to the more lasting brightness of maturer womanhood. To-day, the world

requires something more than facial beauty for its feminine ideal; there must be added to the sweet freshness of girlhood, a higher development of intellect to meet the true needs of an enlightened people; the cultured woman is the woman of the day. The danger lies in overstepping the line; in a tendency to direct her influence away from its true center of usefulness—the home; intellectual culture appears most beautiful when combined with a practical knowledge of the duties that essentially belong to woman, and it should be the aim of our female colleges to form their pupils after this mould. For the accomplishment of this object, time is required: as woman's sphere widens, a longer period of preparation is needed; therefore, it is, that the development of a girl of to-day is slower than it was in the early half of the nineteenth century, and more frequently is heard to-day the praise of “sweet twenty,” than of “sweet sixteen.”

At twenty years the blush of maiden-hood is still fresh upon the cheek; the dreams and ideals of youth remain yet to be fulfilled or disillusioned; joy, love and hope are the prevailing sentiments; yet there is an added charm of womanly dignity,

of riper knowledge, of clearer insight than the more unformed mind of younger years can know. It is, as it were, a point of time where the young heart would fain rest; where every breath is happiness; where there comes no sense of regret for the past, and no desire to hasten the untried future.

Some such sense of joy filled Marion's heart that morning, as she went about the house, crooning some love song which rang in her ears continually, and brought lingering smiles to her rosy lips. She wore a morning dress of pale blue, in contrast with which the blue of her eyes took a deeper hue, and upon her corsage was pinned with a silver arrow, a cluster of early snow-drops, the birth-day flowers which the doctor had previously bribed the old market woman to bring in for that day.

Coming lightly down the broad staircase, the girl became aware of some one standing just within the hall door, and watching her, and she immediately found her hand grasped in cordial pressure by John Seymour.

“You did not know I was to be the honored guest to-day?” he said, his eyes lingering upon

the fair face, then added with a half-sigh, "Ah! the child is the woman now."

Was there disappointment at that first meeting? He hardly knew. Vanished was the child face he had so often pictured, with its unconscious, mirthful look; the luxuriant dark curls, that had hung in tangled waywardness about the dainty shoulders, were now gathered into a graceful coil upon the well-poised head, only a few stray ringlets shading the white forehead. But the face seemed more intellectual, the eyebrows seemed more clearly outlined, and the mouth more sweetly curved. As he looked, the merry light came back into her face, which at the moment of greeting had been serious of cast, and with the roguish smile he remembered well, Marion said:

"You think the change is for the worse? I'm sorry for your disappointment, but, indeed, I cannot help it, sir!"

"I shall not tell you my thoughts," he retorted, playfully, "suffice it to say, the old days are no more. So you are twenty to-day," he added, wistfully. "It is so long since I was twenty I should like to know how it feels."

“Just exactly like nineteen,” was the reply, “I can’t feel a bit older than I did yesterday; but, seriously, it does seem very old, doesn’t it?”

“I suppose you regard me as a Methuselah, then; for I celebrated my thirtieth anniversary a short time since.”

“You never seem old to me,” was the quiet answer, as Marion descended the last step, and together they entered the parlor; but, even as she spoke, and they came into the clearer light, she noted the change that four years had wrought in him. Hard work, and close application to study, showed in the increased thoughtfulness of his face, the rather stern mouth, and an occasional gray hair about the temples. Yes, John Seymour would never be a young man again; at thirty he had out-grown his youth, but he still retained his enjoyment of its pleasures.

Those words of Marion’s, so simply spoken, had gone straight to his heart; “You never seem old to me.” If that were true, what possibility the future still held out for him, for him who in his early manhood had known one passing dream of love, and had since steeled his heart against its inroads; for him, the idolized young minister, to

whom the most exclusive houses in the city held open doors, and for whom more than one fair woman was willing to risk her happiness, but in vain ! At last, there dawned upon him the knowledge that this child whom he had seen grow into womanhood could alone fill his heart. Bah ! was he dreaming ? to dare to think that he could win that fair young life to cast its lot with his ! She looked upon him as an elder brother, nothing more, and with strong effort of will, he put the thought of happiness from him.

The day passed pleasantly for them all; it had been months since John Seymour had given himself a holiday, and he felt a school boy's delight in the absolute freedom from care, and the restfulness which the Thornton's home seemed always to impart to those who came within the shadow of its walls.

The doctor and his wife were the two unchanged ones of the little party which once again gathered in the dining-room. Mrs. Thornton's queenly form, and sympathetic face, and the doctor's portly figure, and kindly countenance, were the same as of old, and soon the talk flowed as freely as if no years had intervened since last

these four were seated around that familiar board. After dinner, the gentlemen remained in the room, while Marion and Mrs. Thornton went to the latter's sitting-room upstairs, to have one of their long, cozy talks, in the midst of which cards were brought to Marion from below.

“Claude Wilton, and Jessica Lynn, what a delightful surprise !” and presently there was a burst of laughter from the parlor, and exclamations of joy which brought Dr. Thornton to the door.

“Hello ? this is a pleasure for our little girl. How are you Claude ?” shaking that young gentleman’s hand, and bending to kiss Jessica’s pretty face. “The dimples are all right, I see,” he said, caressing the soft cheek uplifted to him. “Well, I’ll leave you for awhile, and finish my talk with Seymour.”

“Is that fellow here ?” asked Claude, making a comical grimace, as he heard the doctor’s parting remark.

“Yes, he’s here,” laughed Marion.

“Does he drop in every day ? in a friendly, cousinly manner, of course !”

"No; this is his first visit since my arrival; but I hope it won't be the last."

"Whew! she's just like the rest of the girls now-a-days, Jess; she smiles on the parsons. I don't wonder, though, for they're such a steady lot of men, and don't lead their sweethearts a dance, like me, for instance (seeing Jessica's color rise); now I don't blame the girls for not wanting a good-for-nothing scamp, who can't stick to one thing long enough to make a success of it."

The lazy, teasing tone had changed perceptibly, and Marion was quick to note the dissatisfaction hidden by the raillery of Claude's manner. So when Mrs. Thornton came into the room and engaged Jessica in friendly conversation, quite winning that young lady's heart, Marion took the opportunity to fathom Claude's speech.

"Are you not going to study law, Claude?"

"There was some talk of it, and, to tell the truth, I am pegging away at it now; but, somehow, I don't feel enthusiastic over it," he answered, moodily. "I was made for action, not study, as I tell my father; but he doesn't believe it. Of course, he's disappointed that I don't take to the ministry; but, I tell you what, Miss Marion,

I'm not a hypocrite, if I am a sinner otherwise, and I just couldn't settle down to going about with a long face and wearing a gown; it doesn't suit my ideas of manliness."

"If that is your ideal minister, I feel sorry for you, Claude," she began, gently; then suddenly remembering that such must naturally be his ideal from association, she stopped short, coloring quickly.

"Since we came to New York to live," Claude said, hastily, "my father has had his hands full of work, and I could have helped him, I suppose. I know it must be my fault, that we don't seem to understand each other."

"I know it is not want of capability on your part, Claude; but it may be lack of application, and absence of enthusiasm, as you say. Surely, no man would dare to enter the sacred ministry, unless he felt called of God, and willing to throw all his energies into the work. You are right to shrink from its responsibilities, and its self-sacrifices, if you feel yourself unworthy; but, oh, Claude, don't waste your manhood in playing with life; think of its glorious possibilities, and,

whatever you do, make the best use of the splendid opportunities that God has given you."

Marion's voice increased in intensity as she spoke, and every feature of her expressive face showed the emotion she felt. As Claude Wilton listened, and watched her, the old adoration sprang up anew. More moved than he cared to show, he answered, slowly, his gaze fastened upon her face:

"Perhaps if I had some one always with me, some one in my home to inspire me to work, I might become worthy of such inspiration."

Marion's color deepened, and she could not quite conceal the fine scorn that tinged her answer:

"Such should not be the case; the fountain of truth, which is the mainspring of true manliness, must find its source within your own breast; no outside influence can avail, if there exist not a 'mind conscious of its own integrity.'"

Claude felt the implied sting, but could only say in a low tone:

"The time may yet come when you will find me not wanting in true manhood."

"I believe it, Claude, I have always believed in you, and it is my desire for your advancement

that moves me to speak as I have done. Forgive me, if I have said too much."

"That could never be."

In the dining-room, John Seymour had at last brought the doctor's confidences to an end, and their entrance into the parlor also brought to a close the above conversation.

Claude Wilton re-assumed his usual manner—that of the gay cavalier—his frank, open countenance, contrasting with his light, and oftentimes frivolous, speech. To a casual observer, this splendid specimen of young manhood, with its stalwart frame and well-developed muscles, seemed but a wasted gift; but there were some (and Marion among the number) who knew of acts of unselfishness, and deeds of courage, which would honor the noblest hero of song or fiction; in time of peril, his was the bravest heart, the most daring hand; and, for the sick and helpless, none gave more tender sympathy, or readier aid. But Claude's laughing lips never betrayed the secrets of his heart; nay, they rather hid them from the common gaze.

Jessica was persuaded to remain with Marion during the latter's short stay in the city, and the

afternoon passed in planning expeditions for Miss Lynn's benefit, it being that young lady's first visit to New York City.

John Seymour listened to their joyous talk, and felt himself outside the young world in which they moved with the free step of youth; but only for a moment. Mrs. Thornton's ready tact unconsciously drew him into the charmed circle, and he soon found himself laughing at Claude's mischievous sallies, and enjoyed Jessica's confusion; it generally fell to Marion's lot to protect that gentle maiden from the teasing propensities of her sweetheart's brother. And Frank Wilton had returned to the old allegiance; letters came regularly, giving detailed accounts of his first voyage, and filled with mention of Harold Levering's kindness.

"Levering will make his mark some day," Frank wrote; "already he is high in favor with the officers, and expects to turn his inventive powers to account. He's a man of brains."

Marion was grateful to her absent friend for his influence over Frank, and could not resist a feeling of pride in Levering's chance of promotion.

So affairs had shaped themselves smoothly, and the day passed happily by.

The day of departure came, and the farewells were said hopefully, as the friends expected a speedy re-union at no distant hour. In his study that morning, John Seymour vainly tried to concentrate his thoughts upon the theological treatise that lay before him on his desk. Rising impatiently from his study-chair, he took several restless turns about the room, then re-seated himself with his thin lips tightly compressed.

“It’s no use thinking of her. I would not ask the sacrifice, even if there were a shadow of a hope for me.” And with a determined countenance he took up the freshly-cut magazine, and plunged into the subject with his usual ardor.

And Marion, flying homeward on the south-bound express, mused on this wise:

“He thinks I am a child, and not worth his notice; if he only knew how I miss the old life, perhaps it would be different.” The eyes that looked out dreamily upon the flying landscape were filled with a sudden mist not caused by the car-smoke without, but equally dimming the brightness of the sunlit morning.

CHAPTER XII.

There is such a thing as involuntary unbelief, which sometimes assails even God's dearest children, and disturbs their peace.

—*Bishop Oxenden.*

In the hour of trial,
 Jesus, plead for me,
Lest by base denial
 I depart from Thee;
When Thou seest me waver,
 With a look recall,
Nor with fear or favor
 Suffer me to fall.

—*James Montgomery.*

THE Lenten season was drawing to a close, as one afternoon in early April, Marion Martyn walked slowly homeward in the gathering twilight. She had started out some hours previous to attend the usual Friday lecture, and some strange fancy had seized upon her to walk out to the chapel in the suburbs of the city instead of attending the church nearer home; there had been a feeling of unrest that had lately been stirring within her, disturbing the calmness of her soul. A loosening

of the old ties seemed imminent, and a great dread had seized her that the landmarks of her childhood's faith were about to be wiped out of existence, and no substitute given, only a blank page for the long future. Again and again this dread thought returned, and with it a great longing for higher spiritual knowledge, a questioning of the truth that she might give a "reason for the hope that was in her." And she had hurried on far past the busy streets into the straggling lanes beyond, the remembrance of the sweet country church of four summers ago in whose simple services she had found peace and joy, bringing to her hope of renewed happiness in her religious life.

She thought of Lucy and Alice Freer, and smiled sadly to think that she seemed to be losing what they in their quiet life had gained; for Alice had recently fulfilled the desire of her sister's heart, and was a professing Christian. How long ago those days seemed to the young woman who passed swiftly along, whose fair face, and the finely moulded figure clad in dark blue walking suit, caused the few passers-by to glance more than once at the wearer. They little knew what con-

flict was raging in the heart that beat tumultuously beneath the rich fur cape (the day was a fitful one, a remnant of the cold and wind of April's predecessor).

The chapel at last reached, the girl entered quietly, and took a seat far back in the shadow of the softly colored window near the door. The quiet of the place soothed her, and she joined in the sweet service with deep yearning for the blessing that comes to all true worshippers. The short lecture was forcible and full of earnest simplicity—a practical talk from the lips of one who had known temptation and suffering in following the Master's footsteps. But Marion heard only the words of the text ringing in her ears: “Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.” The words were graven on her heart, and the ten minutes that intervened before the benediction, were but a confused dream to her. “If God be in heaven, as I believe He is, He will not let me be tempted more than I can bear;” and this was the burden of her thought as with tightened lips and quickened breath, she returned home, and entered the sitting-room, where her

aunt sat before the open grate in which a low fire burned.

“You are late,” was that lady’s comment.

“Yes, I have been walking,” was the brief reply. Her aunt must not know of the conflict, however sore, and the girl shivered more at the thought of Miss Roy’s cold triumph, than from the keen weather.

“Take off your wraps, and we will have tea sent up to us, it is so cosy here.”

An anxious tone was in Miss Roy’s voice, for she noticed Marion’s weary manner, and constrained expression. Something was amiss, she mused, after her niece had left the room. “I have noticed a depression of spirits not natural to her; she needs a change of scene.” The elder woman remembered Harold Levering’s devotion, and although Marion had not confided in her, attributed the girl’s occasional moodiness to the separation. Like a wise woman, she awaited results patiently, and did not intermeddle with the love affairs, even of her niece. She had her own heart histories, and reverenced those of others. So when Marion returned, she simply said: “I’ve been thinking for some time, that

we both needed a change, Marion. Suppose we take our Western trip. We can leave the city earlier this year. My work is over for the present, and we will both be benefitted by travel in a country new to us."

Marion's face brightened, and she entered heartily into the plans for the journey, with an eagerness which delighted her aunt. In reality, the girl welcomed any topic of conversation that tended to make her oblivious of her secret misery. They parted early that evening, Marion pleading weariness; but no sooner was the door of her chamber closed, than she stood with wide open eyes, wherein lay no shadow of the longed-for sleep. The hour of struggle had come, and the soul must face its pain alone.

Alone! that one word brought her upon her knees beside the bed where prayers had nightly risen to a watching Father. Was it all a dream, a delusion? Was there no Father then? Yes, there is a God, there is a primal cause of all created beings. In all ages, in all hearts, there dwells a conviction of a Great Spirit, a Soul from which man's soul is derived, of which it is a part. But the Mediator, the Saviour, who only can

atone for the sins of humanity, without whom the “righteous Father” would be inapproachable in His awful glory; was Jesus Christ a superstition, a myth, a “good man,” and yet not the Way, the Life, the Truth, as He had Himself declared? No, falsehood cannot represent truth; He must be the Son of God—or nothing.

Rocked upon a sea of doubt, tossed by the waves of unbelief, for one single moment there swept over Marion’s soul the dark sea of despair. With a low moan she sank farther down to the floor. “My God, I am forsaken!” Never but once had a more pitiful cry reached the Father’s throne—never but one, and that one cry re-echoed upon the desolate human heart. “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?”

Into the darkness came a flood of light. Jesus, too, had been forsaken, with all the world’s sin upon Him. His human heart had cried out for very agony. His divine nature momentarily succumbed; then on wings of faith and love, the Holy Comforter had come, and above all human pain arose the one triumphant cry: “It is finished.” What was finished? The redemption of mankind, *her* redemption from doubt and sin.

Peace came on dove-like wings, and soothed the exhausted soul to rest. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able."

"We do sign her with the sign of the cross in token that she shall not be ashamed to confess Christ crucified." "Ashamed?" never more to be "ashamed of Jesus!" To Marion had come the fiery trial of her faith, but the darkness was forever past; there might come in the long future, temptation and doubt to try anew the steadfast soul, but in the calm victory once gained by Almighty love and power, she felt secure. Jesus was true, let all the world be false. Trembling in every limb from the weakness of that terror which was past forever, the terror of doubting Him, she laid her down to rest, and soon she slept in peace upon her Saviour's breast. "And underneath are the everlasting arms."

With the dawning of another day, she arose, and opening the window, looked out upon the quiet streets. A few of the world's toilers had begun the day, but the great heart of the city still slept. She knew that over the distant eastern hills which were hidden from her view, the sun

was heralding the glories of the morning's birth, while within her own breast, the Sun of Righteousness had risen with wings of healing, for this new day of her spiritual life. Having completed her simple morning toilet, Marion opened her writing desk, and with deliberation took therefrom a note book, and read over its contents. Tearing out two unwritten leaves, she placed them upon the smooth ledge of the desk; then two books were brought down from the shelf, the one, a small worn Bible which had been her mother's; the other, extracts from the writings of a well-known atheist.

Could that man of magnificent adjectives and beautiful imagery but have seen the picture, the fair young face might have pleaded not in vain against the further wreck of souls for which he must give such awful account. With intent brow and earnest eye she bent to the self-imposed task of comparing the sentiment of the two books. She had often wondered at her aunt's infatuation for the man whose face and figure were not unfamiliar to their home, and whose lectures Miss Roy faithfully attended. It was more the atmosphere of her life here, than any words of his that

had tried Marion's faith; for the girl had been quick to note in him, as in her aunt, the exaltation of self, perhaps unconscious to the infidel mind, but always forming its mainspring of thought and action. True, that in their home relations the key-note was not so distinctly heard, but is not home a part of self? even *its* love may be idolatry.

BIBLE.

"None of us liveth unto himself" Rom xiv:7.

"Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Phil. iii:21.

"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." St. John xii:25.

"And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." St. John i:5.

"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. xxii:5.

"He being dead, yet speaketh." Heb. ii:9.

"Let not your hearts be troubled, ye believe in God believe also in Me."

"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." St. John xiv:1, 2.

"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Gal. ii:20.

INFIDELITY.

"I am the sole proprietor of myself."

"For whether in mid sea or among the breakers of the farther shore, a wreck must mark at last the end of each and all."

"While yet in love with life, and raptured with the world, he passed to silence and pathetic dust."

"He climbed the heights and left all superstition far below, while on his forehead fell the golden dawning of a grander day." (What grander day can dawn for a *wreck* that marks the end of all?)

"From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word; but in the night of death hope sees a star, and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing."

(Can *pathetic dust* have *wings*?)

"Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities."

"We strive in vain to look beyond the heights."

The breakfast hour interrupted Marion's parallelisms, and leaving the papers upon her desk, she ran lightly down stairs, overtaking her aunt in the hall below. That lady kissed her niece affectionately, saying, with a pleased voice, "Have you been dreaming of our western travels to bring such roses to your cheeks?" Inwardly she commented that Marion's fit of depression was but transitory, and hoped the memory of Levering would fade in the prospects of new joys.

And Marion was saying softly in her heart, with a wave of pitying tenderness: "I can't believe that the man who wrote those words is in his heart an infidel."

How little we know of the inmost thoughts of those we love! Miss Roy, returning from breakfast before her niece, happened to go through the room, and the papers caught her observant eye. "The Bible,—Infidelity!" The words riveted her attention. Almost unconsciously she took in their meaning; and as she read, the glamour cleared momentarily, and for the first time she realized how truly had been the burden of her life-song: "I am the sole proprietor of myself." The vague unrest of the beautifully worded sen-

tences of her ideal paled before the calm truth of the Word of God. And it was in this channel that the girl's thoughts had been running; the old bent of mind had showed itself, but in an unexpected aspect. Very slowly and thoughtfully Miss Roy passed on into her own room.

Meanwhile Marion was in the parlor with Professor Schmidt, who still came occasionally to supervise his former pupil's musical progress. He was proud of her achievements in that line, and would often sit and listen for an hour to the sweet melodies brought forth by her light, firm touch upon the keys. Expression is the soul of music, and Marion threw her very being into the production of exquisite harmonies, it was the chief pleasure of her life.

“I always feel nearer to heaven when I listen to divine music,” she remarked, as the last chords of Beethoven’s “Pensée Divine” died into silence.

“I would give much for your faith, Mees Martyn,” and the little man sighed deeply. “There was a time when I, too, believed in your God and your Bible.”

“You must not think that I may never have doubts,” answered Miss Martyn; “but oh! Pro-

fessor, if you would only trust God; for He is faithful, however faithless we may be."

"Remember me in your prayers, child; perhaps they may be heard when mine are not."

"There is one prayer we can both use without hypocrisy, 'Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief!' was her parting remark, uttered in a low, shy tone as the Professor took his leave. He had previously bidden Miss Roy adieu, and wished them a prosperous journey.

"Joy go with you," croaked the parrot, as the Professor's short, stout figure disappeared in the hall.

"Is that you, Wretch?" said the object of the bird's aversion, showing his bald head again at the door. "I forgot you were there—good-bye!"

"Get along with you!" shouted Wretch, flapping his wings. The parrot had been so nicknamed by Professor Schmidt, and the name was as odious to the bird as was the giver of it.

CHAPTER XIII.

I was a wandering sheep,
 I did not love the fold,
I did not love my Shepherd's voice,
 I would not be controlled.
I was a wayward child,
 I did not love my home;
I did not love my Father's voice,
 I loved afar to roam.

The Shepherd sought His sheep,
 The Father sought His child;
They followed me o'er vale and hill,
 O'er desert waste and wild;
They found me nigh to death,
 Famished, and faint, and worn;
They bound me with the bands of love,
 They saved the wandering one.

—*Rev. Horatius Bonar.*

IN a certain club-house in New York City, a young man sat looking moodily out of the window. The morning paper lay unread upon the table beside him; outside a fine mist shrouded the street in gloom, the passers-by appeared as dark objects, of which the most conspicuous

feature was the nondescript umbrella. The elements were in sympathy with Claude Wilton's state of mind that September morning. For the past eighteen months, the young man had led a life of wild gaiety, which had brought upon him his father's displeasure, and bade fair to estrange him from his home.

Mrs. Wilton's cheery face had recently grown sadder, and lines of anxious care had made their appearance upon the smooth brow of happier years; for Claude was her favorite child. For him, no sacrifice could be too great, no devotion too tender. The mother's heart went out in deep yearning over the wayward son. When he had finished his law course, and entered upon a profession in which his heart was not placed, a reaction from the old life had come. He soon fell in with a set of young men, wilder and more dissolute than he had, at first, any idea; and afterwards, for very shame, he could not break off from them. Gay parties, late hours, and intemperate habits had told upon him, and at twenty-one the hearty laugh his friends had been wont to hear, was changed to the smile of cynicism. Claude was as unhappy as a man could well

be, for his inmost soul revolted at the life he led, and night after night there was a secret struggle with his higher nature. Moral and upright he still was, outwardly, and no clouded breath dared touch his honor; but he knew that his high standard was lowered, that the very associations into which he was daily thrown, tended to drag him down, and ere long he, too, would be as they, beings, not men.

His love for his mother was still a powerful influence for good. How often had she shielded him from his father's unsympathetic harshness in boyhood days. And, later on, when Claude should have been her stay and joy, she had used her own private income, small as it was, to pay off the debts which he had thoughtlessly incurred. Had they come to his father's knowledge, there would have ensued a stormy scene. So far, the mother had warded off the crisis which must come all too soon.

This course of action was not altogether honorable towards the husband and father, and Claude should have insisted upon no concealment of the truth; but, unfortunately, Mr. Wilton was one of the Elis, who, while attending to the

services of the temple with scrupulous devotion, neglect the spiritual welfare of their children. His study was a place of withdrawal from the cares of his family to the less perplexing, because less human, society of his books. His children knew better than to disturb his solitude by bringing him the confidences of their lives.

As has been the experience of many another man of the sacerdotal family, there was a prospect that the future would bring him the bitter knowledge of alienation from those upon whom he should lean in his old age; and the awakening might be, alas! too late.

Claude Wilton's thoughts upon that September morning had wandered to the past. Again he saw before him, Marion's earnest face, and heard the ring of her voice:

“The foundation of truth, the mainspring of all true manliness, must have its source within your own breast.”

How far had he wandered from the ways of truth? Could he ever again look with the old fearless candor into those searching eyes? Had he been false to himself, to his friends, to his God? “I will arise and go to my Father.” He

thought of his earthly father's stern judgment; he could almost picture to himself that unemotional face, with its air of abstraction from worldly things, of remoteness from the sins and follies of the younger son. "I will arise and go to my Father." What did it mean? It meant a heavenly Father, always tender, merciful, and true, "always more ready to hear than we to pray."

The mist without seemed to have entered through the closed windows and filled the room; the fresh print of the *Times* swam before his eyes, and, though none saw the act of prayer, the pitying Father heard the vow registered by that repentant heart.

Across the room sat a man in clerical dress, who, every now and then during the previous hour, had glanced hesitatingly over the journal in his hand to where the younger man was seated, his back partly turned towards the clergyman.

John Seymour had recognized young Wilton when the latter entered the club house, but there was a look upon Claude's face which forbade any overtures of friendship; indeed, he had not noticed who was in the room, so absorbed was he in his own thoughts.

As the moments passed in absolute silence, and Claude still sat motionless, John Seymour fought his battle too. He had heard of the young man's wild career, and felt a pity for the wasted talents of Marion's friend; but he had never seen Claude at his best, and knew little of him beyond the gay pleasure seeker.

“Why should I seek to rescue him at the peril of incurring his dislike, and setting me down as a sanctimonious parson, knowing nothing of youth's temptations? Could I make him understand that I have felt what he is feeling, and that I do not approve of altogether withdrawing from the world—as if God meant us forever to eat the bread of sorrow—he would not believe me, he would only laugh, and go on his way. And if he should reform, is it improbable that he will win the prize for which I long—one woman's love? He is not worthy of her; it would simply be giving her up to one who could not appreciate her. What am I thinking of, oh, wretch that I am! to place any human love before the love of God, the salvation of an immortal soul! God help us both!”

Claude Wilton rose from his seat, firm resolve

written upon his countenance. The eyes of the two men met, and instantly their hands were clasped in cordial pressure. By some unknown sympathy they seemed to read each other's hearts, and their better natures conquered. True-heartedness shone in their answering gaze.

“I saw you enter, but feared to disturb you,” were John Seymour’s first words.

“I am glad to meet you here,” Claude answered. This was a friend in need!

“I often come in on my free days, Mondays, for instance. I like to keep up with my friends who frequent the place, and it is a restful change from parochial work. By the way, won’t you come and take luncheon with me some day this week? say day after to-morrow, Wednesday?”

Claude hesitated one moment—wouldn’t the other fellows laugh at him? then said resolutely: “Thank you for the invitation, Mr. Seymour, I will certainly be on hand.”

But the luncheon party was not destined to take place. As the two men left the room, a messenger met them.

“Mr. Claude Wilton, is it not, sir?”

“Yes, do you want me?”

"This is for you, sir, I promised to hand it in person."

The note contained a single sentence: "Your mother is dying."

"My God! let me go quickly!" and Claude dashed into the street, leaving the paper in Mr. Seymour's extended hand. It was too true; over-anxiety had brought on a recurrence of heart trouble, and Mrs. Wilton did not live to see the son for whom her latest breath was a prayer.

"Tell him I love him, and that God is merciful," was the last message for Claude. Many former ones he had passed by unheeded, but this one was burned into his heart as with a red-hot iron, and followed him through all his after life. Never again the ringing laugh she loved to hear! but remorse and repentance; and later on, God's smile shining in the face of the man who in those few short hours of anguish left boyhood far behind. In the year that followed, he bent to his profession with an eagerness ill-concealing the inward sorrow, and even his father had no fault to find. Claude learned in those days to pity his father, so helpless in the sudden blow which had befallen him, in the bereavement of the one

being whose unchanging brightness had for twenty-five years filled his home; unconsciously to both, the estranged son and father were drawn to each other by their common grief, and came nearer to understanding one another than they had ever thought possible to do. Maud, brave little maiden, tried to keep the house bright for mother's sake, and her sixteen years grew grave beneath the weight of household cares.

The following spring, Jessica and Frank were married quietly in the dear old church at Newberg, and for a time lived at Dr. Lynn's for the only daughter could ill be spared; then the wandering life began, and first at one station, then another, Jessica's sweet face became known. Often, too, when Frank was ordered on some distant cruise, the thought of her devotion, the memory of home, was an anchor for the sailor's heart.

And Marion Martyn, in the far West, heard of the changes with alternate tears and smiles. Tears for the friend departed, and for those who mourned her loss; smiles of joy and thankfulness that Frank and Claude were saved from the breakers that bound the shores of youth. She

had seen the great cities of the west, teeming with life, and rich in magnificent public buildings and palatial residences; she had travelled among the wild mountains, and had drank of famous mineral waters; and, dearest memory of all! she had looked upon the Mountain of the Holy Cross. There, upon the mountain-side it lay, stretching out its arms of snow; fitting does it seem that the country discovered with a prayer, should lift on high the emblem of the cross! Her health and spirits had been greatly refreshed by this varied life of the past two years, and if at times she felt that there was something wanting to make her happiness complete, she put aside the thought with a calmness which showed where lay her highest love—in the God of the fatherless. Even in their wanderings she found time for reading, and Miss Roy was a valuable assistant in the literary line; so the girl's mind was stored with a fund of knowledge which kept up its healthy tone, and left small opportunity for useless longing.

Not that Marion had no dreams for the future; every young woman must think deeply of the possibilities of life; every true woman has

born in her a love for home and its joys; but happy is she, who, while realizing the rich blessings of an ideal married life, can yet dare to brave the loneliness of a future devoid of near family ties. Numbers of unmarried women, and men, too, there are, who have missed the love of early years, and yet are to-day filling a wider sphere of action and of usefulness than they could otherwise have done. The world is coming to realize that while the life of the family with its tender ties, must be the saving bond of society, there is yet an individual life of self-sacrifice and holiness, attained only when the soul can alone draw near its Maker, without dependence upon any other love in the universe of God.

Marion's association with her aunt was peculiarly fortunate, in the fact that she thus found out for herself what woman can accomplish, if all her powers are well directed. She felt the lack of Christly motive in her aunt's desire to achieve greatness for her own and her family's renown; but, on the other hand, she could but admire Miss Roy's perseverance, and splendidly trained mind. Of late, too, her aunt rarely spoke slightly of religion as she used to do; on the contrary, there

was a gentle deference to Marion's feelings which touched the younger woman, and called forth a responsive gratitude.

Miss Adelaide Roy had never forgotten the parallelisms: "I am sole proprietor of myself," and, "No man liveth unto himself." She wondered often that Marion had escaped an influence of which she, with all her wit and wisdom, had felt the subtle weight.

CHAPTER XIV.

“Veni, Creator Spiritus.”

ONE October morning, John Seymour, crossing the Brooklyn park as he loved to do on his “free Mondays,” heard his name hastily called, and, turning, recognized Claude Wilton coming toward him. A cordial hand clasp and exchange of greeting followed. Although the two men had seen but little of one another during the past year, there existed between them a friendship destined to be lifelong. Claude’s face showed traces of the crisis through which he had passed; and the resolute glance of his eye, the thoughtful manner, the more earnest voice, all revealed development of character.

“I was hoping to see you here,” he remarked, as they walked slowly onward. “Dr. Thornton told me you usually came this way on Mondays.”

“I am more than glad to see you, Wilton. A pressure of work has prevented me from looking

you up since my return to the city last month, but I have thought often of you."

"Perhaps we may yet work on the same lines," the younger man began, hesitatingly.

"Am I right in inferring that you contemplate entering the ministry?" asked Mr. Seymour.

"I have but recently made the decision; in fact, it is that which brought me in search of you. I felt the need of your counsel. Seymour, my life for two years past fills me with remorse. I feel the need of a more earnest purpose for the future. This I could, of course, find in continuing my former studies with renewed vigor; but something within impels me on to take my stand in the ranks of the Church. I believe it to be the voice of God's Holy Spirit speaking to my inmost soul. But oh! my friend, I feel my unworthiness for this holy calling, I cannot trust myself. Tell me, you who are so much farther advanced in the Christian life, if I rightly interpret the call."

Deeply moved by his young friend's words, Seymour motioned to a seat under the trees near by; and, before answering, gave himself up to a moment's silent prayer.

“Thank God,” he said at last, “that you do not trust yourself. You are right to consider well the step you contemplate taking, my dear friend. I believe God is in truth calling you. I would I could reveal to you the joy of a consecrated service; but this each soul must experience for itself, and it comes only with complete surrender of self and of worldly ambition. The words of Thomas à Kempis come to my mind: ‘My son, oftentimes the fire burneth, but the flame ascendeth not without smoke. So likewise, the desires of some men burn towards heavenly things, and yet they are not free from the temptations of carnal things.’ It is for us to remember that each temptation overcome, each holy purpose welcomed into our lives, leaves us stronger to meet future trials. No man can decide for another such a question as this which lies before you.”

“I have decided,” was the firm reply; “and I ask only your word of welcome.”

“It is already yours. I thank God for such a co-worker. Truly, as in the days of our Lord on earth, the field is ever white to the harvest.”

“What I long to do,” said Claude, eagerly, “is

to work among the poor of this city. I want to be in touch with all classes. I have felt the misery of moral degredation, and would give my life to be counted worthy to uplift one soul from the mire."

"What does your father say?" asked his companion abruptly.

"He is pleased. Seymour, my father could never understand a nature like mine; but he has always wished for this, and I feel glad that I can now conscientiously comply with his wishes."

There was a winning simplicity in the speaker's manner which touched the older man's heart. He remembered that one short year ago he did not dream of such depths in Claude Wilton's nature, as had been revealed to him to-day.

"Come to me often," he said in parting. "By the way, did you see my aunt this morning?"

"Yes, I saw Mrs. Thornton. She expects Marion—Miss Martyn, in a few weeks. I wonder what she will say to find me a theologue?" and Claude's face brightened to something of its boyish look as he walked away.

Seymour started in the opposite direction;

then, as if by an afterthought he retraced his steps, and seated himself again under the trees.

He leaned one arm upon the back of the iron bench, and gave himself up to reverie.

“The time for self-renunciation is at hand—or better say, self-effacement. I see my way more clearly now. ‘Veni, Creator Spiritus,’ comes with a deeper meaning to the spiritual ear. I would be free from every earthly tie—not like the monks of old to tread the cloistered cell, from the world’s temptations shielded; but rather, as my Blessed Saviour, to tread the solitary way among these crowded streets; or, sweeter still, upon the mountain side to seek the wandering sheep. Other men may know the joy of human companionship in the home; but for me, there must nothing divide my love with God. I can the better sympathize with human happiness, and human loneliness, in that I have renounced the one and felt the other.

“ ‘In the secret of His presence, how my soul
delights to hide,

Oh, how precious are the lessons which I learn
at Jesus’ side.’

“I should like to know the writer of those lines. They tell me he is one who has passed through

the refining furnaces; he has well learned life's holiest lesson—repose in the midst of turmoil."

As he thus mused, half aloud, the speaker's face was pale with intensity of emotion; but in his eyes was kindled the light of the "celestial fire."

CHAPTER XV.

Old friends, old scenes will lovelier be
As more of heaven in each we see;
Some softening gleam of love and prayer
Shall dawn on every cross and care.

—Keble.

IN one of the rooms of the Hotel Leland, in Chicago, Marion Martyn sat with an open letter in her hand. It was from Harold Levering. Years had passed since they had parted from each other—years in which the girl had become a woman; but there was less of outward change than of inward development. Still the same calm brow above the trustful eyes; the soft, waving hair; the clear, white complexion.

The contour of the face was more rounded, the lips redder even than formerly. And Harold was unchanged; this letter, written in far Eastern lands, breathed still his changeless love. In all the previous ones, filled as they were with

accounts of voyages, and strange peoples and countries, there had been an undertone of deep devotion, unmistakable, though unexpressed; and Marion admired the manly dignity which feared to obtrude his love upon her notice. Now it seemed that he could no longer bear the pain of indecision.

“I will know my fate, cost what it may; and whether or not you return my love, I shall bless the day when I first saw your face, and looked into your soulful eyes.”

Marion let fall the letter, and gazed thoughtfully at the wine-colored chrysanthemums in the tall vase near by, as if in their glowing blossoms she might read her destiny.

Could she love Harold Levering as he deserved? If she married him, would the remembrance of any other face disturb her peace? He would give her unquestioning love, and shield her womanhood with the strength of his pure manhood.

“Oh! I dare not risk our happiness. Yet, if I were his wife, no power on earth could turn me from him. I would endeavor to make his home happy.”

With her face buried in her hands, she sat motionless. Why did other eyes than Harold's come between her thoughts of him—eyes of clear brown that had looked tenderly into hers that morning of her twentieth birthday, as she had come down the stairs and found their owner waiting for her.

She resolutely banished the thought, and attempted to write an answer to Harold's letter.

“Bah! am I so weak? I, who thought myself strong among women.” With set lips she wrote the final words of dismissal; even as she wrote, it cost her a heart-pang to think that there was an end to the friendly letters which had so long been a part of her life, but she realized that henceforth silence would be wisest for them both.

It seemed to her the cutting off of the last tie which bound her to the bright days of youth. When she had finished writing, she entered the adjoining room, and with that yearning for sympathy which comes at times even to the bravest heart, told her aunt all concerning Harold.

“And you do not love him? Think well, my

child, before you take the final step. Love like that does not often come twice in a woman's life."

"Auntie, I do not love him as he should be loved; and I could not care for that roving life."

Miss Roy laid down her pen, and regarded her niece attentively.

"I understand you, Marion. You have reached a crisis in life where aimlessness no longer satisfies. You have ambitions. Tell me of them. But first answer me one question. Is there any other who stands before Harold in your affections?"

Marion hesitated.

"No one whom I have a right to love, Aunt Adelaide."

The keen eyes of the elder woman softened perceptibly as she listened to the answer.

"You are wise, then, to seek some field for your energies. I forget, child, that you are a woman now—twenty-four next birthday, is it not so? I should have anticipated this in one of your nature. But how can I do without you, Marion?"

"I should not care to leave you, Auntie; but we might settle somewhere, and I could help you make a home."

There was a wistfulness in her voice which touched an answering chord in Miss Roy's heart. Had she not years ago felt this same desire for work? and she had found its fulfilment in her writing.

"I will consider your proposition, Marion. Your heart is as true as steel, and you have a clear head on those young shoulders. We shall see what can be done."

"Remember my one talent, Auntie. I should like to put my music to a practical use."

"How would you like to go to Germany to take a finishing course? Would that do for a year or two?"

"Don't be angry with me, Aunt Adelaide. I want to do some special work among the poor, and, at the same time, be with you, and help you in your work."

"Yes, I might give you some employment there. But you do not care especially for scientific studies, Marion."

"I can learn to care," replied the girl, a flash of the Roy fire in her eyes.

"I believe you could *make* yourself do anything," was the laughing rejoinder; "but it is a

hobby of mine that one should develop whatever talent she can use to best advantage. What is it?" she asked, seeing Marion was about to speak further.

"It is the children who appeal to me," was the eager answer. "I have seen them sometimes in my visits to the Hull Settlement with Miss Craighill. You know she is studying up the question with a view to joining a College Settlement in New York. Several times I have been with her to the Afternoons for Women; once or twice I played for them, and they seemed to like it. And often, coming out into the streets, we have met little children crowding around, some of them so pitiful looking and uncared for; but with something of child-glory left in their faces."

"And you would like to take up that line of work?" asked Miss Roy, more moved than she cared to show.

"Yes; I have enough to live upon, with economy; and my music can be made a help in teaching them. I want to study kindergarten this winter."

"Child, I shall not place any obstacle in the way if your happiness depends upon this work.

Once I looked for a different life for you—you might yet be a brilliant social leader; but I see your tastes are not in that line, and I do not urge it. Still, I would have you count the cost. Remember, there will be the sacrifice of many luxuries and pleasures you hitherto enjoyed; and these people you will work among—do not expect appreciation from them. The majority prefer filth to cleanliness, degradation to refinement. But the children—yes; they appeal to the most cynical. We will go to New York for the winter, and take rooms convenient for your work. God bless you, Marion."

Marion looked up in surprise to hear the reverent words from lips that heretofore had scoffed at sacred things.

Following her heart's impulse, she whispered softly: "God grant you peace!"

"Ah, child! that is a strange word to me. It is hard to say it. Pray for me, little one; I cannot pray." And Marion, returning to her own room, fell upon her knees and thanked God that Aunt Adelaide was searching for the God who is ever near to those who seek.

Before taking up a course of study, Marion

paid the promised visit to Brooklyn. One bright November morning found her on the eastward-bound train. The last day of travel brought back vividly to Marion the Newberg home and its associations. After passing Albany, and turning southward, the beautiful banks of the Hudson seemed familiar ground.

What powerful influences were those old associations in her life! yet, in a certain sense, she seemed the veriest stranger to the place from which she and her former playmates had gone out into other homes.

Miss Roy went on to Washington to arrange her business affairs while Marion stayed in Brooklyn. The evening after her arrival in Brooklyn found Marion seated with her friends in their cosy sitting-room. The folding doors between this room and the parlor were thrown open, and a coal fire burned in the grate.

Dr. Thornton had just asked Marion for some music while he smoked, and she had risen to comply with his request.

“If you will smoke the old rose-pipe, as you used to do,” she began laughingly, when the

opening of the hall door caused her to look up. Mr. Seymour entered immediately.

“I see you have resumed your former occupation of assisting Uncle Hugh’s evening meditations,” he said, advancing to meet her. “Welcome back to Brooklyn; but please don’t let me interrupt the music. Will you play for me the ‘Pensée Divine,’ I used to love?”

As the last chords died into silence, Marion turned toward him:

“Now tell me of everyone, and of the new memorial window to my father,” she said, brightly.

“It is very beautiful,” he replied. “I want Aunt Rena to bring you to see it while you are here.”

“The figure of the Beloved Disciple, is it not?”

“Yes; a fine piece of workmanship it is, too. And you want to hear about everyone? I suppose that includes our Wilton friends. I saw Claude to-day, and he says he will be over with his sister the first opportunity. He is studying hard. You know of his determination to enter the ministry?”

“Yes; I am so thankful; for he will throw all

his energies into the work. He has splendid capacity, undeveloped yet, perhaps."

"You will find him changed for the better. His mother's death was a terrible shock, but it aroused him as nothing else could."

"Poor Claude! he was devoted to her as a boy. It will seem strange if he has lost his merry ways."

"It is the same nature, with a finer edge," remarked Seymour. "When he settles down to hard work, he will be a power for good."

"I am very glad," Marion answered; "the city has need of consecrated men."

"And women, too."

"Women must occupy a second place."

"Does that make their work less noble?" he asked, gently. Then, without awaiting a reply, he added: "My aunt tells me you are thinking of settling in New York."

"My aunt, Miss Roy, has consented to my studying kindergarten. You see, I am not content to be an idler, simply because I am a woman. You men have the problem of a life work sooner solved. Is it not so?"

"There was a time," he answered, slowly,

“when I could not freely say, ‘Lead, Kindly Light,’ and trust its holy guidance.” Then, with a sudden abruptness, he raised his searching eyes to hers, and asked: “What would you think of a man who voluntarily resigned earth’s sweetest blessings, that, according to his poor interpretation of the wisdom of such a course, he might more truly devote himself to his life work?”

It was hard for Marion to meet that steadfast look without betraying the emotion of her heart. That keen perception, which was hers by nature, led her to recognize instantly the inner meaning of his words; but all that was noblest in her rose to meet the test.

“Should I meet one capable of so noble a sacrifice, I would count it highest honor to be called his *friend*,” she answered, bravely.

“I thank you for those words; they will live in my heart. And now, dear *friend*, I must say good-bye. If I can help you in any way in your work, let me know.

Ere she realized the parting he was gone.

CHAPTER XVI.

“Florio mio.”

THE kindergarten rooms, in a large Parish House in the heart of New York, were teeming with life, one Saturday morning in February. Outside, cold winds were blowing, and the thinly clad children of the tenement district pushed forward eagerly as they reached the outer door, and felt the warm air within.

Miss Craighill, the head worker, stood welcoming the children as they entered; while Marion Martyn, at the other end of the long room, was talking earnestly to some of the older girls, who acted as assistants.

Two years had passed since she began her course of training; years filled with invigorating work.

Her enthusiasm and her gentle sympathy brought her quickly in touch with those whom she sought to aid. With her co-worker and

adviser, Miss Craighill, there had been a happy union of aims and tastes.

It was a real pleasure to watch the little faces, often bearing the marks of want and cruelty, light up with childish joy at sight of toys, which were to them a revelation of beauty, and an unfailing source of wonder.

The little ones were Marion's specialty, and it was with a happy face she turned toward them as Miss Craighill took her place at the long table. In a moment Marion was surrounded by some twenty-five little tots, some of whom tugged at her skirts, laughing gleefully. How tenderly she quieted them, bidding them take their accustomed places.

"See! we will learn to set tables to-day. Isn't this a pretty tea-set?—just the size I used to have at my dolly's tea-parties when I was a little girl."

Several neatly covered boxes, arranged in a row, served as tables, and very eagerly the children took turns in laying the cover and placing the tiny plates, knives and forks, cups and saucers as they were directed.

"Well done, Sallie!" her teacher exclaimed, as

a demure little girl of five years went through her lesson without a mistake.

When the time for singing came, Marion went to the organ and played, while the children marched around the room to the music. The songs were so simple and pretty that the tiniest child could join in them.

As Marion played, she noticed a tiny face pressed against the window near her. It was a pale face, with a setting of very black curls; and there was a look of intent listening upon it.

“That must be Florio, the little Italian boy I heard one of the children speak of not long ago.” She looked again, but the child, seeing himself observed, slipped quickly from his post.

In the bustle of departure Marion forgot the waif; but, hurrying out into the frosty air, half an hour later, she almost stumbled over a folorn little figure on the doorstep. The child looked up startled, but the pathetic brown eyes had done their work.

“Don’t be frightened. You are Florio, are you not?”

He nodded assent.

“Ah! you are cold. Poor child! Why do you

sit here in the cold? Why did you not come into the warm house with the other children?"

Florio made no reply to these questions, but moved nearer to the speaker, as if unable to resist the magnetism of her presence.

"Are you the angel who took her away?" he asked suddenly, an eager light in his eyes.

"Dear child, I am not an angel, only a woman. But who has gone away?"

"They said an angel took her—my mother, you know;" and his voice grew confidential. "I went to look for her, and heard the music, and saw you at the window with the sunshine in your face, like hers."

"Poor lonely boy! Is there no one else at home?" and she glanced doubtfully toward the Italian quarter.

"My father beats me sometimes when he comes home. Mother said he was so tired; and told me not to cry. A man must never cry—" here the tiny form was proudly drawn up to its full height.

"What does your father do all day?" asked Marion.

"Oh, he grinds the organ, and the monkey dances and I sing; but we do not get many pen-

nies now, and it is so cold all day. I ran away to look for her—" there was almost a sob in the brave little voice.

"You must come with me now, and show me where you live, and maybe I can help you. The angels have taken her where it is never cold, and she will not be hungry any more. Do you know about God, little Florio? I think He sent you to me to-day." They were now walking rapidly toward the Italian quarter, the child's hand tightly clasped in hers.

"She told me God was in heaven—up there—but it is so far away," he whispered.

As they neared Florio's home, or rather the place that gave poor shelter to its crowded tenants, a short, ill-favored man, carrying a heavy street organ, came toward them.

At sight of the boy, the lowering look deepened in his restless eyes. He was about to speak; but something in the face of the young woman caught and riveted his gaze, and he mumbled under his breath as he held out his hand to the monkey, who ran and climbed upon his shoulder.

"I found him looking for his mother," she simply said, and watched the effect of her words

upon the father. To her relief, the man's countenance changed instantly, "He has a heart," she said to herself. The organ-grinder in his tattered garments looked at her and said in broken English:

"He no find her. She gone, my Italia—to where the sun shines. The North it was too cold. She loved the sunshine."

"Will you let me take him home awhile and give him warm clothes and food? I should like to hear him sing, too."

"He sing now," the man replied, a suspicious light in his eyes.

"He is so cold and tired. I promise to bring him back to-day."

"No, no, you take him away. I make no more pennies, and we starve."

"Then will you let him come to the school and hear the music on Saturdays with the other children? And here," she added, "take this card to the number written and they will give you both a warm dinner to-day. Do you understand? Good-bye, Florio, come again to the window and see me." She dared not give them money, knowing nothing of the father's habits, but all that week Florio's eyes haunted her, and she felt eager

to see the child again. The following Saturday morning, she watched anxiously, as one by one, or in groups of twos and threes, the children entered the rooms. To-day was "kitchen" day, when she would show the little ones how to cook tiny dishes, and she could imagine Florio's intelligent face alive with interest as he watched the process. But he did not come, and she ceased to look for him as the morning hours passed. It was just as she began to play the accompaniment to the merry kitchen song, that she saw the door pushed gently open and Florio stood silently on the threshold, the monkey by his side.

"Jacko ?" he asked, pointing to his four-footed companion.

"Marion shook her head; then, seeing the disappointed look on the child's face, she went towards him, saying: "Can Jacko keep quiet ?"

"Oh, yes," replied the child, "Jacko mio, mind his master."

So *Jacko mio* was placed in a corner to watch the children, and though he became wildly excited several times, never moved from his appointed post until Florio was ready to go home. Marion had brought with her a little overcoat for Florio

to wear, and the boy's soft eyes were filled with gratitude as he started away with Jacko.

A year passed, and again it was February. The previous summer, through the benevolence of a noble-hearted woman who was interested in the work, a farm-house was rented in the country, some three hours' ride from New York, and volunteers among the regular workers gave a part of their vacation to looking after the children, who were sent down in relays for a week's stay. Dr. Thornton, one of the managers of the Fresh Air Fund, felt a deep interest in Marion's "project," as he called it; and during the month when she was on duty, made frequent trips to the place. It was upon one of these visits that he first saw Florio and Jacko.

"I have fallen in love with your protégés, but I didn't know you had four-footed guests."

"They are inseparable," laughed Marion, motioning to Florio, who responded to her call with alacrity.

"I want you to sing for this gentleman, Florio mio," she said, using the soft Italian word she had caught from him. And Florio sang.

"He should be a chorister. There is only the

white surplice needed to complete the picture of an angel," remarked the Doctor.

"I had thought of it," answered Marion, "but he is utterly untrained. Only his love for me keeps him in bounds here. But how he does enjoy the freedom of the country, and Jacko is very obedient.

"The poor father! he could never be anything but an organ-grinder; the life has taken too deep a hold upon him; but for the child I am hoping better things."

That was in the summer. The following winter Florio was a regular attendant at the school, and made rapid progress in every way. Marion had undertaken to teach music as a specialty to the most gifted of the children, Florio among the number; and she hoped to make a true musician of the boy.

It was a hard winter; many previous ones had been hard, but in this one a culminating point was reached.

Despite the generosity of the philanthropic, and the earnest efforts of the city missionaries, the low ebb of business and the general depression in consequence, caused additional suffering. Mur-

murs arose among the trades-people, and strikes were threatening everywhere. What was a real cause for grievance to the workers, became an excuse for the discontented idlers.

Marion heard much, and thought much, as she went back and forth to her work, and saw men standing sullenly on the street corners. They knew and respected her as one who loved "the little 'uns,'" but an anxious look haunted her face as she realized her powerlessness to save even the children from the result of lawlessness.

Claude Wilton was in the thick of the fight. At such a time his tremendous physical powers stood him in good stead; and his sympathy for the poor, his pity for the deluded, his influence with both employer and employees, made him respected by all classes. Day after day he might be found reasoning with the leaders of the Unions, or striving to alleviate some special case of suffering which came to his notice. While the people of the slums loved him, they also feared his stern sense of justice, his reverence for the laws.

Coming down the street one morning, early, he found himself launched into the midst of a gathering mob, who were beyond all reasoning.

The contagion spread wildly, women and children joining the ranks, and proceeding boldly into the leading thoroughfares. As he fought his way along, he saw Marion on the opposite side of the street, with Florio beside her.

Her face was very pale, but she kept her ground bravely, and the crowd did not molest her. She was talking earnestly to Florio, who stood near by, his wild Italian blood on fire. He wanted to follow his father; but his love for his benefactress would not let him leave her in danger. He might have been a knight-errant of maturer years, so boldly he stood beside her, his dark eyes flashing as the crowd surged on its resistless course.

Suddenly a sound of firing was heard; the militia was bearing down upon the insurgents, and the mob was stopped in its course and turned backward. Claude saw the danger, and leaping forward, made his way by sheer force to Marion's side, and drew her to a sheltered corner. One arm kept her by his side, the other pushed away the maddened and now terrified populace. It was over in a few minutes, and Marion, trembling visibly from the sudden horror of the scene, found

herself almost alone with her protector in the street which had so lately been the scene of tumult. But where was Florio ? He had been swept along with the crowd.

It was long since these two had met except as busy workers in their respective fields; the old sense of comradeship came back amid the dangers they encountered together. Silently they walked toward Marion's home, until Claude suddenly said in the bright voice she knew so well:

“Ah, comrade, are you not convinced at last that you and I cannot work alone ?”

And he read the answer in her tell-tale eyes as she looked up at him through a mist of tears.

But she simply said: “Find Florio for me, Claude.”

Two hours later he rang the door bell, and Marion, who had been waiting anxiously his return, greeted him with questioning eyes.

“He is found.”

“Where ?”

“At the hospital now. He was badly injured.”

“I shall go to him.”

“Can you bear it ? He calls for you.”

For answer she simply put on her hat and cloak

and followed him into the street. In a short time they reached the ward where Florio lay, his poor little limbs mangled and his body racked with pain; but he knew her instantly, and stretched out his hand with a smile beautiful to see, so touched was it with mingled love and pain.

She knelt beside him, silently holding the outstretched hand. No words were needed to tell her that he could not live.

“Florio mio, look to Jesus,” she whispered softly.

“Say it for me,” he said, between his moans. She knew what he meant:

“Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child.”

And then she stopped, for he was dead. Some one drew her tenderly from the bedside, and together they went out into the dark night.

Miss Roy sat up to await them. She, too, looked pale and worn that night. Indeed for some days Marion had noticed a lack of vivacity, coupled with an effort to appear at ease before Marion. A long interview with Mr. Hallowell the previous day had seemed to tire Miss Roy greatly. That gentleman was loud in his praises

of her botanical work recently published, and considered it a valuable addition to that branch of science.

“She might rest now,” Miss Roy said, and Marion’s devotion, in spite of her grief at Florio’s death, was very sweet to the weary heart.

Marion simply said to Claude: “I cannot yet leave my aunt;” and he was content to await the coming of a brighter day.

CHAPTER XVII.

Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.—Gospel of St. John.

BUT Miss Roy had something to say on the subject of a postponement of the marriage, being persuaded that a long engagement would be both tedious and unnecessary for all parties concerned.

“Mr. Wilton has waited long enough for this happiness, and I wish you to enjoy your young married life while you may. Child,” she continued sadly, “all my early life was marred by one fatal mistake. I loved a man who was brilliant, handsome, and fascinating, but unworthy of the affection of a true woman. I would listen to no appeals from my friends, calling their kind intervention a slander against him. When the

blow came, and I found him all, and worse, than they had told me, I was heartbroken; my pride refused consolation, for the idol of my life had fallen, and none could raise it up again. Instead of living ennobled by sorrow, I became embittered; for years I doubted my most faithful friends; and one, the truest of them all, I sent away with words of anger I would give my life to recall. He never uttered one reproach for the love he had lavished upon me while I yielded to the infatuation of another's worthless avowals; but went from me, saying that he would always believe in me, and so long as I cared for no one else, he would have hope; that he vowed never to marry any other woman while I lived.

“I disdained the idea that a man could keep a vow like that longer than the passing hour, and said I knew he would be taken with the first pretty face that came along; for my lack of duty was another bitter pill. But he loved me for myself alone, as time has shown me; and to-day is as ready for my coming as ever in the days of my youth. Marion, I have come to trust him at last, for he has a record as honorable as ever graced the pages of knight-errantry; and I,

after years of struggle against conviction, am bound to acknowledge that his Christian motives have kept his life free from all stain; you understand now why I hesitate to-day to reward his faithful service. I feel unworthy of him whom once I spurned.

“To-morrow is our forty-second birthday—your mother’s and mine; no threads of gray are yet in my hair, but the heart of youth is gone. It was crushed by one fatal blow, and never again has felt the old joyous thrill; gay I have often been since then, the leader of brilliant companies, but, under the mask I wore, existed an endless sorrow. Time and experience have changed my ideals; the heroes now are those that wear the spotless robe of virtue, however homely the wearer’s face. Your love has done more to soften me than any other influence of my life. Oh, Marion! you are, indeed, a child of the covenant; prize that priceless inheritance above all else. My childhood’s home was not a happy one; peace never entered its dark portals; but I draw the veil over the errors of the dead.

“When you came to share my home and heart I wished that you should follow in my footsteps.

Gradually I learned, that, like your mother, you possessed a courageous soul beneath that gentle exterior, and I watched your struggle with doubt and unbelief, as if I, myself, were experiencing anew the terror of darkness. If I could have prayed, my prayer would have been that you might retain your child-like faith in the God who was to me unknown, for I knew that otherwise your peace was gone forever. Your faith triumphed. I have watched you often since, to note whether the victory was a lasting one, and I have never seen you waver. I am glad beyond measure that you have a future before you which calls into play the nobler energies of your nature.

“As for me, if James Hallowell will take me as I am, groping in the darkness which I have myself helped to create, I am determined to try to atone in some measure for the past. It is hard, hard, for one who has spent twenty years in steeling her heart against religion, to find its joys in a moment; that time of comfort may never come to me. Enough if some faint rays of truth illumine my later years; 'tis more than I deserve.”

At the name of Hallowell, Marion started, and amazement was depicted on her countenance. She had seen him but once, soon after her arrival in Washington, six years ago; and so well had her aunt guarded the secret, that the girl had given him but a passing thought. Now she recalled with pleasure his kindly face and courteous manners, and rejoiced in her aunt's decision.

"When will he come, Auntie? Oh! I am so glad! Never was there more deserving knight than he. It does a woman's heart good to know such constancy exists in this changing world."

"He is waiting for a message from me, and that message went on its way an hour ago. You see now, darling, why I wish you to marry young, before your heart grows hard."

"Aunt Addie, no one could ever accuse you of being hard-hearted or selfish," Marion stopped suddenly, remembering how but a few years since, those very traits in her aunt's character had pained her, and threatened to alienate their inner lives. Yes, her aunt had changed. Thank God for it.

And Mr. Hallowell came that evening. Marion would have known him anywhere, though his

hair and beard had whitened in the few years since their first meeting.

“I do believe you are more excited over your aunt’s marriage than your own,” declared Claude Wilton one day when Marion had been talking eagerly about the affair.

“It is really more romantic, don’t you think so?” replied the girl archly, her eyes sparkling with merriment.

The following spring the usually quiet house on Gates Avenue, Brooklyn, was in a bustle of preparation for Marion’s wedding. Guests began to arrive early in May, among them Mr. and Mrs. Hallowell, of Chicago.

Of gifts that came to Marion at this time, there was one which she valued most of all, for the sake of the generous-hearted friend, who, in distant lands, remembered her without bitterness. It was a star of pearls upon a tiny gold pin, and in the center of the pearls glowed a precious sapphire that well matched the eyes of the bride-elect. Marion showed the gift to Claude, and tears glistened in her eyes at the thought of Harold’s loneliness. There had been but one magnet to draw him home, and now that was

removed, he felt "home" and "native" land were to him unmeaning words.

There was another to whom Marion's heart turned at this time; she had not been able to visit Olivia since her return, and this she considered one of the last duties to be performed before she allowed herself to be wholly absorbed in her own happy life.

In the asylum, life moved on more smoothly for some of the inmates than it did for many burdened hearts in the world without. For Olivia, there were no anxious care for the morrow, no regrets for the past, and no fears for the future. Hers was simply an existence without the joys or griefs of humanity; it was, in fact, a total unconsciousness of any world but her own room. It might seem almost happiness, this absence of sensibilities, which is a state sometimes invoked by those who suffer and enjoy intensely; yet who, no matter with what bitterness he looks on life, who would exchange with the imbecile? In one instance alone Olivia was to be envied. No matter how frequently her mind wandered in helpless confusion among the mazes of struggling thought, there was one knowledge she had never lost, one

ray amid the darkness, and that was her faith in God. It would have melted any heart to hear those usually feverish lips repeat with calm and forcible earnestness, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want," etc. Past understanding are the ways of the Lord, yet we know He does provide.

There was one distinctly inherited trait in Marion Martyn's character—a constancy to friendship once formed, be it that of the great or the lowly. A kindness once received was not easily forgotten by her. It followed, then, that old Bridget came in for a share of her happiness at this time. One bright morning found Marion on her way to Bridget's home, in one of the many villages dotting the banks of the Passaic river. It was a beautiful little town, whose long avenues of shade trees had but recently burst into luxuriant foliage.

Marion, after alighting from the ill-ventilated accommodation train, walked lightly along the lane leading to Bridget's house. She was in the mood to enjoy those sweet "silences of Nature," of which a writer of our day has so tenderly spoken; the fresh, soft air came to her as a breath

of another world than the great, busy city whose spires gleamed in the distance.

Her thoughts went back to that first summer in Virginia with the Freers; then, like the shifting scenes of a panorama, the years rolled backward. Once again a tiny child held its earthly father's hand, as the two wandered about the streets of quaint Newberg-on-the-Hudson. Again she was playing in the gardens with the Wilton children, or tending flowers with Jessica Lynn. Then came the remembrance of that second outward consecration in the old Brooklyn church; and later, those years in Washington which had brought the "trial of her faith."

She drew a deep breath of thankfulness as she realized what life would have meant for her without a personal God; the memory of that night of darkness and doubt was redeemed only by the after morning of hope and trust.

Marion felt that these past experiences were a preparation for the life opening before her. She had scarcely reached Bridget's cottage when the door opened, and her old nurse hastened to meet her.

“Ach! here’s me darlint drop’t right down on to me flower garden from the bright skies! When I woke airyly in the mornin’, I felt in me owld bones that somethin’ was a goin’ to happen, an’ sure it has. What for will you kiss a wrinkled cratur’ like me, choild? Sure, an’ its a long time since I looked into your swate blue eyes. Come in and rest yerself. The owld moither be glad o’ a sight o’ my bonny girl.”

Marion, half laughing, half crying (for somehow the tears came easily that day) followed Bridget into the house, and soon the two were given up to those tender memories which filled their hearts with a sense of nearness, which no difference of rank or condition could disturb.

Late that afternoon, Marion returned to the city, carrying in her hands clusters of spring flowers; and in her heart, the remembrance of Bridget’s parting words:

“Sure, an’ it’s Mister Martyn’s own choild yer be, to come so far to see yer owld Bridget. God bless me darlint.”

The dear old professor had listened to the persuasions of his former pupil, and had promised to play the wedding-march.

"Not Mendelssohn's, nor Lohengrin's, but the march I used to hear you play so often. I love the memory of those grand chords!" Marion had written.

"It is the air in the *Tannhauser* of which Mees Martyn speaks, yes, I feel sure of it!" and sitting down at his beautiful piano, the dearest friend of his life, Professor Schmidt forgot the outside world in listening to the melodies his fingers brought forth. It was long months since he had played that air, and Wretch, who had become reconciled to his new home, since Miss Roy had sent him as a farewell present to her friend, Wretch recognized the march.

"Where's Marion?" he shouted, flapping his wings indignantly.

"You are a smart bird, after all," said his master, laughing as he rose from the piano and lighted his pipe.

"Ugh!" groaned the parrot, subsiding into a meditative state as he watched the curling smoke. "Ugh! women never are where they're wanted!"

"You are right, old fellow," said the professor; and a long silence ensued.

CONCLUSION.

Thanksgiving day of the following autumn dawned beautifully clear; even the occasional gusts of wind that swept the air could not mar the crisp brightness of the morning. The Rev. Claude Wilton was to conduct the service at the Harlem church in the temporary absence of the rector.

The church was appropriately decked with the fruits of the fields for the celebration of the festival of the Church's Harvest Home. After the conclusion of the services, Claude Wilton, addressed the people upon the blessings of thanksgiving, and his heartfelt words stirred many a dull heart that day to generous action. There was a note of joy in the ringing tones of his voice which touched a responsive chord in Marion's

heart, as she sat quietly drinking in her husband's words, and unconsciously encouraging him with her earnest gaze. So many causes for thankfulness! She could never before have rejoiced as she did that day, with a peaceful joy that could not be disturbed.

The benediction pronounced, the congregation quickly dispersed, some few lingering to greet the sweet-faced young woman in the minister's pew.

At length Marion was left alone, and after a moment spent in silent prayer, she arose and went to meet her husband, who, coming through the vestry room door, had paused to watch the kneeling figure, with the softly radiant light from the eastern window lingering upon it.

Silently they walked down the aisle, and with clasped hands stood beneath the memorial window to her father. It was a beautiful church which had succeeded the little **Mission** that had been the scene of John Martyn's early labors, and fitting did it seem that the memorial to his faithful services in the Master's cause should bear this simple inscription:

“THE REVEREND JOHN MARTYN,
Born, Oct. 2, 18—; Died, Aug. 10, 18—.

IN MEMORIAM.

“‘He being dead, yet speaketh.’”

Yes, though dead, he had, indeed, spoken; not only in the work begun with earnest, patient toil in a seemingly barren field, which work had increased like the mustard seed into a mighty tree—the visible Church of Christ; not only in the memory of those who had labored with him, and paid this tribute of loving gratitude to his noble example; not only in these things did he still speak to men. But in the heart of the little child, so tenderly loved, and whose infant steps he had guided up to God—in her heart, through life, had lingered the influence of that love; in her very darkest hour (and there had been more than one) she remembered always the words he had taught her lisping lips to say: “God loves you, Marion.”

It was she who first broke the silence.

“We will not let any sadness mar this, our first Thanksgiving Day together. My heart is

full of joy; I pray only that I may be worthy of my father's love—and yours."

In a low tone Claude Wilton repeated the words of their favorite poetess:

“Beloved, let us love so well,
Our work shall be the better for our love,
And still our love the sweeter for our work,
And both commended for the sake of each,
By all true workers and true lovers born.”

FINIS.

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